CAROLINE.

IN

THREE VOLUMES.

BY

A LADY.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

HISTORY

OF

CAROLINE.

Narſby Caſtle, July

I Aroſe on the Earl's entering the room; but from the various emotions I experienced, unable to ſupport myſelf, was again ſinking on the ſofa, when he haſtened to me—eagerly and with affection he claſped me in his arms, and in a rapturous tone of voice cried, "Welcome, my love—my deareſt Caroline—welcome to the huſband who adores you—what tranſport—what exquiſite delight—thus to fold to my heart, its dear and ſole poſſeſſor.

My ſpirits had been exerted to their utmoſt ſtretch, and my mind prepared for a reception ſo totally different from what I experienced, could no longer contend with ſuch conflicting ſenſations: reclining, therefore, on his ſhoulder, I ſunk into an agony of tears. He tenderly replaced me on the ſofa, and ſeating himſelf by me, ſupported me in his arms, while kindly ſoothing, in a voice of love and affection, he uttered the fondeſt, moſt endearing expreſſions. I remained for ſome time in this ſtate, abſolutely inſenſible to every conſideration; but as thoſe painful emotions ſubſided, I was ſtartled at the reflection on the impropriety of my appearance: —ſoon, therefore, as I became ſufficiently collected to articulate an apology, I ſaid,

"Forgive me, my Lord—my ſpirits weakened by fatigue and anxiety"

He haſtily interrupted me———

"Do not, my love, (he cried) attempt to make an apology—when from me alone it

it is neceſſary—it is I who muſt entreat your pardon for thoſe various and ſevere trials of your ſenſibility. Let me, however, lead you from this gloomy apartment to thoſe more conſiſtently prepared for your reception."

On ſaying this he aroſe, and, taking my hand, conducted me to a diſtant part of the room, where was a door which the tapeſtry had effectually concealed. He threw it open, and my eyes (long accuſtomed to gloom and obſcurity) were abſolutely dazzled with the blaze of light and ſplendor which inſtantly ſtruck my view. With aſtoniſhment I beheld a magnificent ſuite of apartments, lighted throughout with the utmoſt brilliancy, and furniſhed in the firſt ſtyle of elegance and taſte. The moſt beautiful and coſtly ornaments were in profuſion diſplayed; and whatever fancy could invent, or fortune procure, appeared here

collected in the ſuperb and various decorations.

A tranſition ſo ſudden and unexpected inſtantly recalled to my idea the recollection of ſome fabulous deſcription; for ſcarcely could I reconcile to probability or reaſon this aſtoniſhing, and even myſterious ſcene. The Earl led me through the rooms, and to the laſt apartment where a collation was prepared. Here, looking on me with a ſmile of ineffable pleaſure, and affectionately ſaluting me, he ſaid,

"Once more let me welcome my beloved Caroline to theſe apartments and to me. How I rejoice at your returning health—what exquiſite beauty!—painful have been my apprehenſions, leſt thoſe attractive charms might have expoſed you to inſult or inconvenience in your apparently unprotected ſtate. Not even your ſimplicity of dreſs can conceal this lovely per-

perſon, though I feel grateful for your compliance with my requeſt."

He expreſſed the moſt apprehenſive ſolicitude leſt I ſhould have been incommoded by the violence of the ſtorm; and ſcarcely could my aſſertion convince him that his fears were groundleſs. He would then have led me to the table, but I requeſted that he would permit me firſt to attend to my child.

"We will conſign our Harriot, my love, (he replied,) to the care of Mrs. Johnſon: ſhe is in the next apartment, and waits your commands."

He opened the door, and, calling her, he preſented her to me, ſaying,

"This lady is my wife; I expect, therefore, that you ever conſider her in that light, and that your behaviour is conſiſtent

with the duty and reſpect her ſituation demands."

On her retiring he placed me at the table, and, ſitting by me, requeſted me to take ſome refreſhment, culling each rarity with ſtudious care, and watching over me with attentive fondneſs.

A change ſo great, ſo unexpected, his behaviour ſo abſolutely reverſed from his preceding conduct, wholly engaged my thoughts; and for ſome time I could only liſten, and wonder in ſilence. At length I ventured to ſay,

How agreeably, my Lord, you ſurpriſe me.

In a rapturous tone of voice, he anſwered, " If agreeable, my Caroline, every wiſh, each anxious hope and care, are gratified. You know not—you cannot form a conception of the many years of reſtraint ---of abſolute miſery which I have endured

red from my firſt acquaintance with you at the rectory."

Is it poſſible, my Lord, that at ſo early a period of my life I could engage your attention?

"On my introduction to you I felt the influence of that engaging, attractive beauty, which imprinted on my heart an impreſſion that all the ſtudied efforts of your ſex could not efface. I beheld in you thoſe pleaſing artleſs charms, equally unconſcious, and unſolicitous of power; but on a more intimate acquaintance, when I found that the attention and abilities of your father had enriched your mind with all intellectual knowledge—had endowed you with every elegant and uſeful accompliſhment —You acquired that aſcendancy which time nor abſence could ever eradicate. In your ſociety alone I experienced happineſs, and drank deeply of the delicious poiſon, be-

fore I reflected that my peace of mind might be for ever endangered.

" Pride at length interpoſed. I was ſtartled at the impropriety of indulging an attachment, where the diſparity between us (forgive me Caroline) raiſed an inſuperable objection. I therefore determined on flight as my only ſecurity, and accepted of the propoſed embaſſy, not doubting but abſence, together with the neceſſary avocations of my employ, would effect a cure. Vain, however, were my hopes. Ineffectual all my efforts; for, like the ſtricken deer, the barbed arrow rankled in my heart; nor could two years of voluntary baniſhment efface your loved idea from my mind. On my return I formed the reſolution to avoid you. With ſtudious care, therefore, I ſhunned Howard Park, and fixed on Scotland as my future reſidence. Soon, however, the alarming ſituation of my nephew, my heir and ſole ſurvivor, of this branch of my family, requi-

required my attendance on him at the Wells. A few days after my arrival, I was requeſted by a party to accompany them to a ball, merely to paſs away a tedious hour; I aſſented, though abſorbed in my own reflections. I was wholly indifferent to the amuſement, and inattentive to the company. Walking, however, accidentally round the room, to my inexpreſſible aſtoniſhment I ſaw you—ſaw you ſurrounded by a circle of the firſt diſtinction, whilſt every graceful charm was heightened and improved by the elegance and ſplendour of your dreſs. I beheld you with wonder and delight, though not unmixed with the moſt painful emotions; for though I could ſcarcely doubt, I could not endure the certainty of knowing, that happy man exiſted who was entitled to call you by his name: Mr. Hamilton, however, ſoon introduced you to me, and with tormenting ſenſations I congratulated the envied huſband of the woman I adored. To avoid you was no longer in my power; for in the

contracted ſpot where we reſided, our parties, our amuſements, were the ſame. Relying, therefore, on the barrier placed betwixt us, I immediately renewed my acquaintance with Mr. Hamilton, whoſe character, from the moſt flattering repreſentations, had, on his introduction to me at the rectory, attracted my regard. Too ſoon, however, I found that, ſeduced by faſcinating allurements under the maſk of pleaſure, every noble faculty was ſunk in weakneſs and degeneracy. Anxious—feelingly alive for your happineſs, I ventured to become his monitor. A grateful friendſhip followed this advice; nor could I refuſe my frequent viſits, when at ſuch a period they were earneſtly deſired. But, gracious heaven! how ſeverely was I tortured by this compliance—I conſtantly ſaw you—ſole and dear poſſeſſor of every fond affection—endure with unexampled patience, gentleneſs, and fortitude, the moſt diſtreſſing, moſt agonizing ſcenes.—But let me not afflict you by ſo painful a retroſpect;

ſpect; my heart was torn with anguiſh at your ſufferings; and ſevere was the conflict to conceal my emotions. All my ſophiſtry was uſeleſs; my peace of mind was wholly deſtroyed, and my only chance for comfort aroſe from the hope—the viſionary hope of forgetting you. For though you then were free, my former objections were ſtill unconquerable; and while I conſidered Mrs. Hamilton bleſt with youth, beauty, and affluence, the object of univerſal admiration, I could not deceive myſelf with the expectation that ſhe would conſent to a private marriage, or accept the only propoſal which (in juſtice to the dignity of my family) I conſidered myſelf at liberty to offer. When, therefore, I quitted the Wells, it was with a reſolution again to become an exile, and in foreign climes to ſeek for that comfort which was denied me in my native country.

" Anxious to accelerate a plan from which I indulged the hope of deriving con-

ſolation, I haſtily repaired to London, where I learnt the ſurpriſing reverſe of fortune which you had experienced. This defeated every ſcheme; it revived my hopes; and though I would inſtantly have ſecured you from diſtreſs, yet how did I adore the dignity of your mind, which influenced you to decline my aſſiſtance. From Agatha's friendſhip was now my principal apprehenſion. I could not doubt her generoſity, and was firmly perſuaded ſhe would fulfil the ſolemn promiſe ſhe had made: but with pleaſure I found that you nobly rejected a life of dependance, and had retired to obſcurity to avoid the ſolicitations of your friends. My determination was, therefore, fixed, though delicacy for your ſituation prevented the diſcloſure. I commiſſioned Johnſon to gain the confidence of your ſervant, and was by that means acquainted with every event. I learnt with concern that your health had fallen a ſacrifice to mental anxiety, but heard with pleaſure that you were in the

power

power of mercenary wretches, who would deprive you of even the humble aſylum in which you were ſheltered. This was the event I ardently wiſhed for—you were reduced to that ſtate of deſpair, which diveſted my propoſal of its chief objection. At this period, therefore, I waited on you, —but inconceivable was my diſtreſs, when I beheld you, ſinking beneath the preſſure of poverty, ſickneſs, and deſpondence. All my boaſted command of features was ſcarcely ſufficient to conceal the feelings of my heart, and I had nearly diſcovered, under the maſk of pride, the humbleſt, the moſt apprehenſive lover. With heſitation I mentioned to you my propoſal, though I left to your determination with apparent indifference, my only chance for happineſs, but waited the reſult with an anxiety never before experienced. I received your conſent with tranſport, and wiſhed to declare the grateful pleaſure which I felt: but I had long perceived your opinion; I knew that you feared me; that you had attributed

to

to pride and arrogance a reſerve, which proceeded from the deprivation of every comfort; and therefore reſolved, under an appearance of chilling indifference, and haughty ſuperiority, to hide the feelings of an heart wholly—unchangeably yours—My motives for this deception I ſoon will acquaint you with. My viſits, conformable to the character I had aſſumed, were unavoidably ſhort, which aſſiſted my plans.

"At our laſt interview I confeſs my apprehenſions of a diſcovery had power even to check, for a ſhort time, the pleaſure which I felt at calling you mine; but that ſenſation was momentary when I ſaw you, and every fond and grateful emotion, filled my mind. To diſguiſe thoſe feelings, I was compelled to adopt auſterity and unkindneſs, determined to perſevere in my reſolution till the moment of our meeting in the caſtle. But what a conflict when I found myſelf alone with you, and heard you with

with that ſweetneſs and complying gentleneſs, combat ſuch ill-timed, ſuch cruel ſeverity. My very ſoul was filled with admiration; and while with apparent haughtineſs I received your hand, I could on my knees, with the ſincereſt gratitude, have thanked you for the invaluable bleſſing. I could no longer conceal my feelings. and was obliged to retire with precipitation, or my emotions would have diſcloſed my ſentiments.

"And now, my deareſt Caroline, you are informed of the inmoſt ſecrets of that heart,—ever attached—devoted to you—and happy beyond expreſſion ſhall I conſider myſelf, if the ſincereſt gratitude, the unremitting attention of the fondeſt huſband, can hereafter procure me an intereſt in your affections, and afford ſome compenſation for the ſacrifice which you have made."

And

And at the concluſion of this aſtoniſhing declaration, I will put a period to this letter, from your ever affectionate

CAROLINE.

IN

IN CONTINUATION.

Narſby Caſtle.

THE Earl's confeſſion whilſt it ſurpriſed, gratified me, for I had ever ſuppoſed him guarded againſt thoſe refined feelings, and even ſince I became his wife, have felt the mortifying reflection of being the object of his indifference.

He then inquired reſpecting my journey and added,

" I have paſſed the time in inconceivable anxiety, though Johnſon has given me conſtant information of your ſafety. But when by his return I knew that you were arrived at Edinburgh, my ſenſations were inſupportable; the pleaſure which I felt

felt at knowing you were within a few miles of me was counterbalanced by my fears. I was alarmed at your travelling alone, and in the evening—and to add to my diſtreſs, I ſaw the impending ſtorm, which threatened to fall with violence. I felt all the terrors which you muſt experience in the gloomy and obſcure vaults, through which you were compelled to paſs, before you arrived at thoſe apartments, and was apprehenſive that your ſpirits would be unequal to ſupport ſuch various emotions. My ſituation became too painful for concealment, and I was under the neceſſity of pleading to my numerous gueſts a violent indiſpoſition, to diſguiſe my feelings; but when I ſaw Johnſon take his uſual place in the ſupper-room, by which I knew you were arrived, my ſenſations are not to be deſcribed; every moment appeared an age of torments, and the painful reſtraint was beyond my reſolution to conceal; with readineſs and pleaſure, therefore, I complied with the advice of my friends, who

aſſured

aſſured me, that I was too ill to remain in company, which gave me the much-wiſhed-for permiſſion of haſtening to you."

He afterwards ſaid,

"Johnſon has for ever obliged me, by the ſtrict propriety, delicacy, and ſecreſy, with which he has diſcharged this important truſt. His wife will be your attendant. I have appointed her the principal houſe-keeper in this caſtle—a ſituation which, while it gives her an undiſputed authority, leaves her at liberty to attend on you. Their apartments are adjoining to yours; ſhe wholly reſides in them. and from my general commands poſſeſſes an abſolute power, to order to them what ſhe chuſes or thinks neceſſary; ſhe by this means will be at liberty to procure every requiſite for you, without exciting curioſity or raiſing ſuſpicion. Be aſſured, my love, that the point to which all my thoughts have centred—my ſtudious conſtant care has been to contribute to your comfort, and

to

to render your retirement as little irkſome as poſſible."

In this explanatory converſation the hours ran imperceptibly on, and the Earl, on examining his watch, expreſſed his aſtoniſhment at finding it near one o'clock.

"How rapidly (he exclaimed) have theſe hours paſt—the happieſt I have ever known. Let me, however, call Mrs. Johnſon to attend you to your apartment."

On the following morning, he informed me, that he had an unavoidable engagement, which would detain him till the hour of dinner, and conſequently, he ſhould be deprived of ſeeing me till ſix o'clock. He added,

"This interval will be inſupportably tedious and irkſome—but I will repay myſelf for the ſacrifice, by devoting the reſidue of the day to you."

His

His abſence left me at liberty to examine my apartments, which conſiſt of what I ſhall diſtinguiſh as a muſic-room, (becauſe a variety of elegant inſtruments are contained in it), a withdrawing-room, dining-parlour, and bed-chamber. I do not mention the gothic apartment—that room, as I have carefully avoided—ſo I would exclude it from my recollection. I am convinced I ſhall never encounter its gloom, without feeling depreſſion. The other apartments are built in a modern ſtyle, lofty, ſpacious and pleaſant; the windows are within the ramparts of the caſtle, which conceal them from obſervation, yet they command an extenſive pictureſque proſpect. The furniture and decorations of thoſe apartments diſplay the moſt exquiſite taſte, magnificence and elegance, and whatever can conduce to my comfort, or contribute to my amuſement is ſtudiouſly ſelected—a grand piana forte, an harp, every neceſſary article for painting and drawing, an elegant writing deſk;

deſk; in ſhort, excluſive of books, not the minuteſt circumſtance appears to be forgotten. I was at firſt ſurpriſed at this omiſſion; but on reflection account for it, by ſuppoſing, that the Earl will ſelect from his library what he approves, for my peruſal.

My wardrobe is filled with every neceſſary and elegant article of dreſs, both for myſelf and child, in every reſpect conſiſtent with his rank and fortune. I find that Jenny, my late ſervant, has been an uſeful aſſiſtant, without entertaining the remoteſt idea that ſhe was employed for me;—Johnſon applied to her to procure a variety of dreſſes in the firſt ſtyle of faſhion and elegance, for a lady whom he deſcribed, nearly to reſemble me, in height and ſize. As his orders were unlimited, you may conclude, no expence has been ſpared; thoſe circumſtances I conſider a tacit hint, that regardleſs of my ſecluded ſtate, the Earl expects my appearance to be

be conſiſtent with my rank, if he condeſcended to acknowledge and permitted me to mix with the great world.

A very long period has elapſed ſince the buſineſs of the toilet engaged my attention, but I now devote more than uſual time to this important taſk. Mrs. Johnſon, who appears a genteel and ſenſible woman, is my aſſiſtant.

Thus, my Louiſa, have I given you a circumſtantial account of my ſituation, that you might be able to form an idea of my proſpects. A change ſo great, ſo unexpected in the Earl's manner and appearance (for his features are now enlivened by his ſmiles) and the certainty, that inſtead of the haughty chilling indifference with which I conſidered he had ever regarded me, I, alone, have been the object of his conſtant attachment—have wholly poſſeſſed his affections. Thoſe reflections have inſpired me with hope, and in a great meaſure

meaſure tended to diſperſe the gloom and deſpondence in which, from a ſtate of anxious uncertainty, I have long been involved.

How far a life of perpetual ſecluſion may be conformable to my inclinations, time and experience can alone determine; at preſent, I have not had leiſure to form a judgment, and the novelty of my ſituation ſerves to amuſe—of this, however, as well as every other event you ſhall be informed. Though thoſe letters are unavoidably written at different periods, I ſhall ſo connect them, as to give you an idea of the evening of my arrival, and firſt day I paſſed in the caſtle—ſo ſingular a ſituation muſt excite the ſenſibility of my Louiſa for the fate of her friend—of her affectionate,

CAROLINE.

In CONTINUATION.

Narſby Caſtle, July 18

THE Earl came punctual to the time he had appointed; he met me with viſible pleaſure, and expreſſed himſelf happy at being releaſed from engagements which ſo long had deprived him of my ſociety—my dreſs was particularly noticed by him, and he appeared delighted with the alteration in my perſon, which ſo great a change had occaſioned. He affectionately careſſed my Harriot, taught her to call him Papa, and declared he ſhould ever conſider her as his child.

He afterwards deſired that I would accompany him to the muſic room, and with earneſtneſs requeſted that I would oblige

him with an Italian air, which he had heard me perform at the Wells with the harp accompaniment; though long out of practiſe, I immediately complied, and was ſufficiently gratified by receiving from him the moſt rapturous approbation. He then played a leſſon, and with ſuch exquiſite execution and taſte, that I could not but expreſs my aſtoniſhment at finding him ſo perfect a maſter, aſſuring him, that I had ever conſidered him unacquainted with, and even indifferent to, this accompliſhment. He, ſmiling, ſaid,

You thought my mind diſcordant, that I "had not muſic in my ſoul." You, I allow, have reaſon to form every unfavourable concluſion; it ſhall, however, be the ſtudy of my future life to eradicate the impreſſion you have entertained.

He then aſked if I had examined the apartments; and whether I approved of their allotment and decoration, and on my expreſſing my perfect approbation, he ſaid,

"And

"And is your dreſſing-room furniſhed conformable to your taſte? It is with peculiar pleaſure and ſatisfaction I have ſurveyed that apartment; the elegance of the furniture, and the various beautiful ornaments contained in it, render it far ſuperior to any room of that deſcription I have ever ſeen. Your admirable collection of books, too, ſelected with ſuch care and judgment, muſt, I am convinced, merit your approbation."

I liſtened to him with aſtoniſhment, but aſſured him that I had not ſeen a room of the deſcription he had named, nor found a book in any apartment.

"Permit me, then, he ſaid, to conduct you to it: I am anxious for your opinion."

He aroſe, and taking my hand, led me through the apartments to the bed-chamber —on entering it I was ſurpriſed to find a door, which had till then been effectually

concealed by the wardrobe; he opened it, and I entered a room, but with what words can I convey an idea of my aſtoniſhment, when, on looking around, I perceived every part of the furniture, each ornament, and all thoſe revered treaſures which had been depoſited in my dreſſing-room in Groſvenor-ſquare, the loſs of which I had never ceaſed to regret My books, the invaluable preſent of my deareſt father, were ranged in their uſual order, and but one alteration was viſible throughout the apartment, which was, that Mr. Hamilton' miniature was removed, and a ſtriking reſemblance of the Earl ſupplied the place. I ſurveyed each well-known object with unſpeakable delight, nor for ſome time could recover ſufficient recollection to expreſs my gratitude.

At length, turning towards the Earl, (who gracefully leaning againſt a chair, was attending to me with looks of fond affection,) I ſaid,

" How

"How inſufficient are words, my Lord, to deſcribe the grateful ſenſe I feel for this kind, this conſiderate attention."

He haſtily replied,

"Am I not infinitely repaid, my Caroline, by the pleaſure which you have expreſſed? Be aſſured that I ſhould conſider half my fortune well beſtowed, if, in the ſmalleſt degree, it could contribute to your comfort, and with pleaſure I would have paid a ſum of far greater magnitude, to obtain the poſſeſſion of this dear reſemblance, (looking on my picture,) which till yeſterday that the beloved original was ſecurely mine, has been my conſtant companion."

I expreſſed a wiſh to know by what means he had gained the information relative to my late apartment. He replied,

"On my arrival in London from the Wells, I began my immediate preparation for quitting the kingdom; but this plan was moſt unexpectedly, and I may now

add, happily defeated, by being informed of the execution at your houſe in Groſvenor-ſquare. I wiſhed to apprize you of it, but concluding you with Agatha, I knew not where to addreſs you, and could have no idea of the ſhock you were compelled to experience. I, however, ſent Johnſon to purchaſe what might appear your immediate property. He brought me an inventory of the ornaments of your dreſſing-room, and knowing from deſcription that ſome part muſt be valued by you, I directed him to purchaſe the whole. To preſerve this treaſure for you, afforded me at the time infinite ſatisfaction, though I had no other view than to reſtore it to you; not daring to entertain the idea of the happineſs I now poſſeſs, for I was ignorant that you had not an excluſive proviſion for your future ſupport. But as you muſt perceive that I refine on all my pleaſures, ſo I reſolved to indulge myſelf with the gratification of introducing you to this apartment, and have anticipated with delight the pleaſing

ſing ſurpriſe I had prepared for you. The wardrobe, therefore, was purpoſely placed before the door, which Johnſon removed ſince I came to your apartments."

We afterwards returned to the drawing-room; and when we had finiſhed our tea, he ſaid,

"Have you to-day viſited the gothic chamber?"

Oh, no, my Lord; I ſhall not, I fear, attain ſufficient ſtrength of mind to view it without terror; even the recollection of its gloomy appearance recalls every painful ſenſation I yeſterday experienced, and I would ſtudiouſly ſhun a place which appears calculated for the indulgence of every melancholy reflection.

"I muſt not have you, my Caroline, (he replied), who are endowed with ſuch unexampled fortitude and reſolution, indulge this weakneſs. Oblige me now with

your company; by accuſtoming yourſelf to it, you will be diveſted of thoſe terrors."

I immediately attended him—but here was an additional ſubject for aſtoniſhment; for, except its vaulted roof, no trace remained of its former appearance: the tapeſtry was removed; the furniture exchanged for what was modern and elegant; and as there were three windows, (two of which the tapeſtry had concealed,) it was both light and pleaſant, and appeared as a ſpacious and handſome antichamber.

Surely, my Lord, I exclaimed, this is an enchanted caſtle, and you are under the influence of ſome magician: for by magic only thoſe various metamorphoſes can have been effected.

He laughed at my idea; then ſaid,

"Johnſon has, in this caſe, been the enchanter, and a very few hours completed the tranformation; for the tapeſtry was purpoſely

purpoſely placed there by him, and was a mere temporary concealment. And after this confeſſion, my love, which diſcovers ſuch deliberate cruelty, can you forgive me?. Before you condemn, however, hear my motives.

I have known ſufficient of human nature to be convinced, that all our evils are leſſened, and our pleaſures augmented by compariſon. With the moſt attentive care, therefore, I prepared this room, collecting in it whatever might contribute to its gloom and horror, intending to inſtil in you the idea that it was your future reſidence, purpoſely that your apartment might appear with additional comfort. From the ſame motive I have endeavoured to impreſs your mind, that I was haughty and ſevere, in the hope that when I had thrown off the maſk—when I could prove to you that my heart was wholly yours, you might feel more favourable ſentiments. But after

thoſe ſevere trials of your ſenſibility, let me again aſk, can you forgive me?"

I not only forgive, my Lord, but thank you for thoſe proofs of your conſideration; and let me aſſure you, that my mind is lightened of its care, and every comfort augmented by the contraſt which I had formed of you and the ſcenes around me.

"All deception, my Caroline, is now at an end; and from this period it ſhall be the ſtudy of your happy huſband, to gain by aſſiduity, affection, and gratitude, a place in this valued heart, the attainment of which would amply compenſate for years of miſery; would leave me not a wiſh ungratified."

He then aſked me to walk on the ramparts; and on opening a door I perceived the winding ſtaircaſe, I deſcribed to him, the terror I had experienced in the vaults, and

and the agitation with which I had aſcended it; and added, ſmiling,

Do not apprehend that I ſhall attempt to eſcape from you; I ſhould never attain reſolution to deſcend to that gloomy abyſs.

"If (he replied) you ſhould determine on flight, let this be the courſe you purſue (opening another door), for you would then run to, not from me, as this ſtaircaſe leads to my apartments."

The rampart is a walk of a conſiderable length, as it extends around both the quadrangles of the caſtle, which, from its elevated ſituation, commands moſt extenſive views; they are bold and romantic, but not with the beautiful variation I have been accuſtomed to admire: theſe impreſs the mind with wonder, not delight. Another proof was here diſcovered of the Earl's ſolicitude to oblige me; for in this place a

variety of curious and odoriferous plants and ſhrubs were collected.

"I knew (he obſerved) your partiality for thoſe delightful and various productions of nature; for often, when paſſing your cottage at D——, have I ſeen you, with all the beauty and innocence of our firſt parent,

——————" Among the fruits and flowers,
" To viſit how they proſper'd, bud and bloom'd.
——————" They at *thy* coming, ſprung
" And touch'd by *thy* fair tendence, gladlier grew."

After ſo beautiful a quotation, and elegant compliment, it is not poſſible for me at preſent to add more, than that I am your ever affectionate

CAROLINE.

In CONTINUATION.

Narſby Caſtle.

THE ſingularity of thoſe apartments, ſo different in their appearance and ſtyle of architecture, from every other part of the caſtle, attracted my curioſity, and I inquired of the Earl the motive for which they were built.

" I know not (he replied,) for what cauſe, though I conjecture they have (as now) concealed a treaſure. From various reaſons, I form the concluſion that they were built by my grandfather, who was left a widower at an early period of his life; and who, after that event, wholly

ſecluded

ſecluded himſelf within this caſtle. It is probable, therefore, he had prevailed on ſome lady to be his companion. My father, I am well convinced, was unacquainted with the circumſtance, and I owe the diſcovery merely to an accident; for, prior to my leaving England, in conſequence of the embaſſy to which I was appointed, I ſpent a ſhort time at this caſtle to make the neceſſary arrangements during my abſence. One day, whilſt examining ſome writings in my ſtudy, a paper of material conſequence was miſlaid, and I gave Johnſon orders to make a diligent ſearch for it. This occaſioned the removal of ſome part of the furniture; and on replacing it, he found an hollow ſound proceed from one ſide of the room, which appeared the original wall of the caſtle; immediately he removed the tapeſtry, and perceived a door, but it was faſtened by a ſpring of a very peculiar conſtruction, which reſiſted his efforts to open. He

mentioned the diſcovery to me, and I reſolved to explore the myſtery with him. On opening the door I found a modern ſtaircaſe, which, on aſcending, led me to your anti-chamber; this room (the antiquity of which denoted that it was a part of the original building) would have terminated the ſearch, if I had not recollected, that as the winding ſtaircaſe in the tower led to it, there muſt be ſome motive for building the one I had diſcovered. I carefully, therefore, examined the tapeſtry, and after an arduous ſearch, I found a door which was the entrance to theſe apartments; they were completely furniſhed, and evidently with taſte and convenience, though from long diſuſe it was in a decayed ſtate. Your loved image, which neither abſence nor change of ſcene could eraſe from my mind, now recurred with additional delight, and I formed a thouſand viſionary plans of happineſs, in conſidering you the charming inhabitant.

Though

Though thoſe plans were too romantic even to admit the hope of completion, yet I could not by a diſcovery ſo wholly deſtroy the fabric I had raiſed, I therefore enjoined Johnſon to the ſtricteſt ſecreſy. After your unexpected, though to me moſt happy reverſe of fortune, when I could indulge the delightful hope of one day calling you mine, I reſolved again to examine thoſe apartments; for which purpoſe I ſpent a part of the preceding winter. I planned various alterations, which Johnſon, with the aſſiſtance of a workman, a ſtranger to the place, undertook to accompliſh; and as at the ſame time I appropriated to his uſe the range of apartments at the Weſt-end of the caſtle, which communicate with thoſe, but to which there is a ſtaircaſe on the other ſide of the quadrangle, it effectually checked all ſuſpicion, for it was conſidered that he was ornamenting thoſe rooms intended for himſelf. To his aſſiduity, care, and attention, therefore, I owe,

in

in a great meaſure, my preſent felicity; and he has this day confirmed the opinion I have long entertained of his gratitude and goodneſs of heart: for on my offering him a ſum of money, as (in my idea) an inconſiderable reward for the obligations he has conferred on me, I found the utmoſt difficulty to prevail on him to accept it, modeſtly obſerving, that "He had merely diſcharged his duty, and that he was ſufficiently rewarded by having been the humble means of contributing to my happineſs."

"I likewiſe propoſed, as a proof of my conſideration and regard for him, to diſpenſe with his public attendance on me, (as is now his cuſtom); this really diſtreſſed him; and he ſaid,

"Do not, my Lord, unleſs I ſhould have the misfortune to diſpleaſe you, ever deprive me of the honour of waiting on you."

He

He was the ſubject of our converſation when he entered the room to inform us ſupper was ready; this neceſſarily occaſioned an interruption; I ſhall, therefore, make it the concluſion of this letter from your

CAROLINE.

IN CONTINUATION.

Narſby Caſtle.

DURING the courſe of the evening, the Earl ſaid,

" Will you not accuſe me of incivility to my numerous gueſts by ſo long abſenting from them? To reconcile ſome circumſtances, which to you may appear inexplicable, I will inform you of the ſyſtem I long ſince adopted. On my acceſſion to my parental fortune, it was my firſt care to confirm every cuſtom eſtabliſhed by my anceſtors. In this, therefore, their principal reſidence, the ſame unbounded hoſpitality prevails, which has invariably diſtinguiſhed this place, and which I conſider

conſiſtent

conſiſtent with my rank and conſequence ſtill to ſupport. My invitations are, therefore, unlimited, and conſequently my viſitors numerous; but as my mind courts ſtudy and retirement, I have ever appropriated a part of the day to my favourite purſuits. The mornings I devote to my friends, and conſtantly dine with them. The evenings I conſider myſelf at liberty to ſpend conformable to my inclinations. Soon as we remove from the dining parlour, which (as I never ſuffer that hated vice inebriation) is at an early hour, I remain till my gueſts are engaged in their various amuſements, and then retire. Muſic is always provided, (for the Scotch are paſſionately fond of dancing); cards are placed for the graver parties. Sometimes I rejoin them at ſupper; though, ſince my preſent reſidence in the caſtle, that, (for a reaſon, comprehended I hope by you) has been but ſeldom; I generally, however, return before twelve, to take leave of them for the night; and this is likewiſe underſtood

underſtood as a hint that I expect my family to retire. Probably I may be condemned for ſingularity; but I am gratified by finding that order and regularity preſide throughout, and as my friends appear pleaſed and cheerful, am convinced their reſidence with me is not diſagreeable. Thus having formed my plans, it occaſions neither reſtraint nor ſuſpicion to adopt them, and I can indulge in the delight—the rapturous pleaſure of paſſing thoſe hours with you, and not incur the cenſure of incivility or neglect."

Here, then, my Louiſa, I will cloſe this letter. From my preſent proſpects I have every reaſon to hope for comfort, though I know not whether I ſhall be ever reconciled to a total deprivation of liberty. Now, the diſtant view of the winding ſtream—the gay enamelled mead, excites a ſigh of regret, and occaſions me to envy the humbleſt peaſant, who unreſtrained can tread thoſe flowery paths. I will not, however

ever repine—in every ſtate of life our enjoyments are incomplete, and I have reaſon to be grateful, that from the peculiar circumſtances attending my ſituation, I have even a chance for happineſs. The Earl will take charge of this packet; he has deſired that, in future, my letters may be addreſſed under cover to him.

You and Agatha are my only correſpondents, and your letters now will be doubly welcome—they will tend to enliven my ſolitude, and convince me I have ſtil. ſome connexions with the world—ſome friends, who are intereſted for the ſecluded

CAROLINE.

IN

In CONTINUATION.

Narſby Caſtle, Auguſt 15.

I Have paſſed ſeveral weeks in this place, and no longer feel my confinement irkſome, or regret the world I have left. Merely to ſay I am reconciled to my ſituation, would but imperfectly expreſs my feelings; it were ungrateful if I did not confeſs that I am happy; nor will you be ſurpriſed when I inform you, that it is the unremitting ſtudy of the Earl to procure for me every comfort and gratification. He evidently leaves me with regret, and returns to my apartments with viſible pleaſure, and in his behaviour unites the tenderneſs of the huſband with the aſſiduity of the lover.

His

His ſociety affords me an inexhauſtible ſource of amuſement and inſtruction, for he is maſter of every elegant accompliſhment, and poſſeſſes moſt extenſive knowledge of men and manners, which his long reſidence in various foreign courts has enlarged and improved.

During the evenings which he has conſtantly ſpent with me, he frequently amuſes me with his entertaining converſation, deſcribing places, or drawing characters with the moſt ſpirited energy of expreſſion. Sometimes he reads to me, from ſome approved author, while I work. He is deſirous of improving my pronunciation in French and Italian; I therefore, at his requeſt, read to him, and converſe in thoſe languages. He draws and paints with exquiſite taſte and judgement; from his inſtructions, therefore, I cannot but derive material advantage. Muſic, of which he is paſſionately fond, continually delights and amuſes. Never, at any period of my life

life did I feel myſelf ſo forcibly impreſſed with gratitude to my beloved father, as during my preſent ſecluſion—the care he beſtowed on my education, and the accompliſhments, in which he inſtructed me, are a conſtant reſource againſt the languor that too frequently depreſſes the ſpirits in a ſtate of ſolitude, and (what is now far more material) enable me to contribute to the Earl's ſatisfaction and comfort. His generoſity and gratitude are boundleſs, which he proves by the elegant preſents he has beſtowed on me; though I cannot but obſerve, that he has diſcretion even in his munificence, for all the ornaments which he has profuſely laviſhed on me, are conſiſtent with the ſecluſion to which I am doomed. Jewels, therefore, and every part of dreſs which might denote my appearance in the world, are ſtudiouſly avoided. He has given me a moſt ſuperb watch, a beautiful ſet of pearls, and various other elegant trinkets; he likewiſe preſented to me an hundred guineas, as a quarterly

payment, ſaying, "it was for pin money." This I would have declined accepting, obſerving, with a ſmile,

"You forget, my Lord, that I cannot have any uſe for money."

He however, inſiſted on my taking it: I then deſired him to give me notes for a conſiderable part of the ſum, which I ſent immediately to Agatha, requeſting ſhe would apply it in thoſe charitable and uſeful inſtitutions which ſhe has founded, aſſuring her, that every quarter ſhe ſhould receive from me a ſimilar ſum.

Auguſt 22.

The Earl this day preſented to me a letter from Agatha, which informed me that ſhe was on the road to Scotland, and intimating her wiſhes to viſit me, adding,

"Obtain but permiſſion, and I will cheerfully tread the gloomy ſubterraneous vaults, and ſubmit to be confined within thy dreaded

dreaded gothic apartment, to procure a few hours converſation with thee."

I gave this letter immediately to the Earl, who, having read it, ſaid,

"Pray, my dear Caroline, invite her to the caſtle; it will afford me pleaſure to be inſtrumental in procuring for you the ſociety of ſo valued a friend. But we will not make her a priſoner. If ſhe will condeſcend to be conſidered by the family as a viſitor to Mrs. Johnſon, ſhe may have continual acceſs to your apartments without being confined in them. Do, my love, propoſe this plan to her, and inform her that Johnſon ſhall conduct her here, whenever ſhe will fix the time.

I anticipate the pleaſure of this interview with ſuch ſenſations of delight, as can be exceeded only at that happy period when I may hope again to ſee you."

Strange and ſurpriſing have been the vi-

ciſſitudes of fortune, which I have experienced during the few years of our ſeparation. Be aſſured, however, that though great have been the changes in my ſituation, my heart remains unalterably fixed in its affection for you, which has been the ſupport and ſolace of your

CAROLINE.

IN

In CONTINUATION.

Narſby Caſtle, Auguſt 29.

MY deareſt Agatha arrived here yeſterday. Johnſon accompanied her hither as a friend of his wife's. She was, therefore, immediately conducted to her apartments, and in a few minutes I had the happineſs to embrace her. She viewed me for ſome time in ſilence, though with the moſt expreſſive attention; then ſaid,

"I dreaded to meet thee, leaſt I ſhould ſee dejection and deſpondence on thy countenance; for even thy aſſertion was inſufficient to convince me, that ſo ſecluded a ſituation could afford thee comfort: but I rejoice to ſee thy features wear the bloom of health, and ſmile of content."

Deſirous of reconciling her to my ſolitude, I ſhowed to her my apartments, and pointed out their convenience, as well as the attention which had been beſtowed to procure for me every comfort and amuſement. She ſurveyed the whole with perfect indifference, only obſerving,

"Still it is thy priſon."

The Earl joined us at an early hour; and as her converſation with him was unexpected and ſingular, I will relate it in her words. He addreſſed her with the politeſt eaſe and freedom, reſpeatedly thanking her for the pleaſure ſhe beſtowed on himſelf and his Caroline by her viſit. She advanced towards him, and offering him her hand, ſaid,

"I rejoice to ſee thee, and thank thee for even the limited portion of comfort thou haſt beſtowed on my friend. But let me tell thee, that I pity thy proud heart, which influences thee to conceal ſo valuable a treaſure; and by refuſing to acknowledge her

her as the partner of thy rank, depriveſt the world of ſo bright an ornament."

He appeared ſtartled, but immediately ſaid,

"Spare me, amiable Agatha, and kindly draw a veil over this weakneſs (as you will term it) by reflecting that the precepts inculcated from early youth, by thoſe to whom I owed obedience, all tended to enforce the neceſſity of ſupporting unſullied the dignity of my illuſtrious anceſtors. The reflections of maturer age have more firmly rooted thoſe principles, and taught me that by marrying beneath my rank and family, I ſhould diſgrace myſelf and them."

"When thou beſtoweſt ſo gentle an appellation as weakneſs on thy conduct, thou deceiveſt thyſelf: cooler reflection muſt inform thee, that it proceeds from an unworthy pride, diſgraceful to thy enlightened underſtanding. The merit of thy wife entitles her to ſhare the higheſt honours thou

thou canſt beſtow; and though with gentle meekneſs ſhe acquieſces to thy imperious will, it does not leſſen the tyranny which inflicts it."

"Charming Agatha! how much I admire your generous friendſhip; but let me aſſure you, that my Caroline does not require an advocate. She is dearer to me than life; and I am prouder in conſidering myſelf her huſband, than in all my titles. My every care, my only wiſh, my conſtant ſtudy, are to promote her happineſs, and prove my gratitude."

And let me aſſure you, my deareſt friend, I added, that the kind attentions of the Earl, leave me not a wiſh ungratified.

She took my hand, then ſaid,

"I rejoice to hear thee, though I muſt lament thy loſs of liberty."

Then

Then looking around her with an inimitable ſmile, ſhe added,

"Thy cage is, indeed, gilded; but I ſhall ever conſider it a ſplendid priſon."

She immediately changed the converſation to one leſs perſonal, and the Earl was much pleaſed at her ſpirited and entertaining remarks. He likewiſe appeared anxious to remove from her mind every unfavourable impreſſion, and was therefore more than uſually chearful.

On parting for the night, ſhe ſaid to him,

"Though I muſt always expreſs my diſapprobation of thy conduct, yet I frankly own, I never ſaw thy Caroline appear ſo happy."

He rapturouſly caught her hand, and thanked her for the pleaſure ſhe beſtowed on him by this remark.

September 5.

The kind, the friendly Agatha, is ſtill my gueſt; ſhe never leaves me, except when the Earl is with me, and then, accompanied by Mrs. Johnſon, ſhe walks in the park and gardens. Laſt evening ſhe informed us, that ſhe had extended her walk, and viſited the cottages on the heath; and addreſſing the Earl, ſaid,

"Thou who haſt ever repoſed in the lap of luxury, canſt form no conception of thoſe ſcenes of wretchedneſs which I have witneſſed; I have beheld poverty, diſtreſs, ſickneſs, and misfortunes, within the very ſhadow of thy caſtle."

He appeared ſtartled at the information, aſſured her that he was ignorant of ſuch diſtreſs, and immediately gave her his purſe, requeſting ſhe would apply it for their relief. She took it, ſaying,

"I readily conſent to become thy almoner, and am happy to know thy heart

is

is formed for pity. I perceive, that when misfortunes are obtruded on thee, thy hand is open to relieve; but thou doſt not conſider, that patient merit would rather ſink to oblivion, than *court* the bounty of the proud and great. It would be thy Caroline's care to *ſeek* the dwellings of the wretched, to ſooth the afflicted, relieve the diſtreſſed, and by making thy fortune a benefit to others, pour prayers and bleſſings on thy head. Thou knowſt not half her excellence, and art ignorant that a conſiderable part of thy munificence to her is already beſtowed in procuring comfort for the helpleſs and unfriended. Reflect, therefore, that from her ſecluſion thou depriveſt the unfortunate of a benefactreſs and friend, and thyſelf of an everlaſting reward."

Here the converſation ended; but as it left a viſible impreſſion on the Earl, I have been circumſtantial in the relation of it.

September 9.

This day I parted from my valuable friend. The Earl, who exceedingly admires her, joined with me in earneſt ſolicitations for a repetition of her viſit before ſhe quitted Scotland. She, ſmiling, ſaid,

"I think my promiſe ſhall be conditional, that I may ſee thy wife placed in the ſituation ſhe ought to fill in thy family."

He made no other anſwer than enforcing his requeſt; and ſhe (who is a perfect judge of human nature) lightly touches on the faults or prejudices of mankind, without purſuing the ſubject to wound the feelings. Indeed ſuch irreſiſtible grace accompanies all ſhe utters, that though the reproof might wound, you muſt admire the admonitor."

September 15.

Your anxiouſly expected packet, my deareſt friend, is juſt tranſmitted to me from

from Agatha. It is your anſwer to the diſtreſſing confirmation of my misfortunes. My kind, my affectionate Louiſa, how feelingly you participate in my diſtreſs; with what energy, what warmth of friendſhip you commiſerate my afflictions, and with what liberal generoſity you have contributed to my relief. Though my preſent ſituation renders your favours unneceſſary, yet believe that my heart is impreſſed with a grateful ſenſe of your kindneſs. The encloſed drafts I will retain till I have the pleaſure of reſtoring them to you.—I am concerned, however, to reflect, that your ſolicitude for me will occaſion you to undertake the voyage at a ſeaſon ſo unfavourable as that in which you muſt embark, though I rejoice that the happy change in your ſiſter's ſituation permits her to reſtore you to your friends. Anxiouſly ſhall I now wait for the much wiſhed-for information of your arrival in your native country. After peruſing your Letter, I preſented it to the Earl, ſaying,

" You

"You will here, my Lord, diſcover the heart of that friend, to whom I have been ever obliged."

He read it with attention and viſible pleaſure, and on returning it, ſaid,

"I admire your noble-minded friend, and ſhall be happy to ſee and thank her for her generous kindneſs. But I rejoice, my dear Caroline, at the diſtance which has ſeparated you; for her liberality would have defeated all my plans; ſhe would have been a more dreaded opponant than even our Agatha. Perhaps I am indebted for my preſent happineſs to her reſidence in India."

At your requeſt I ſhall continue my journal, though I ſhould be happy if you received it from the hands of your ever affectionate

CAROLINE.

Narſby

IN CONTINUATION.

Narſby Caſtle, September 24.

AGAIN, my Louiſa, it is the lot of your unfortunate friend to be the prey of apprehenſive fears and painful anxiety. A moſt alarming accident has happened to the Earl; his arm is broken by a fall from his horſe. He left me yeſterday, after taking our accuſtomed walk on the ramparts, and then informed me that he ſhould be unavoidably abſent till after dinner. He uſually ſpends an hour with me when he returns from his airing. I formed, therefore, no expectation of his company till ſix o'clock; but finding that hour and the next paſs without ſeeing him, I grew ſeriouſly alarmed. Punctuality is a ſtriking trait in his character, and, in all his engagements with me, he has

has never deviated from the minute of his appointment. Finding, therefore, the ſucceeding hours elapſe without any account from him, I became anxious and uneaſy, and for the firſt time felt my confinement irkſome; for my mind was in that reſtleſs ſtate, that every employment ceaſed to amuſe. I applied to Mrs. Johnſon for information; but her huſband was abſent, and ſhe only knew the Earl did not return to dinner. This was another ſource for alarm, as it muſt be ſome material cauſe would make him deviate from his invariable rule, of never dining from the Caſtle.

I, however, remained in that ſtate of anxiety and ſuſpenſe till the clock had ſtruck ten, and I now found that it was his ſociety from which I derived every comfort, which conſtituted all my happineſs; for without him my ſituation was a joyleſs ſolitude. Shortly after ten Johnſon came to my apartment. Speech was unneceſſary, for his alarming appearance diſcovered the importance

importance of his errand. With the moſt gentle precaution, however, he informed me of the accident, adding, that he had not quitted his Lord till his arm had been ſet, and he was tolerably eaſy and compoſed. I enquired where the Earl then was.

"At Sir John Campbell's, Madam; about twelve miles from hence. The accident happened near his houſe, and my Lord was immediately carried to it. The groom was ſent to me by three o'clock, with orders that I ſhould inform the company in the caſtle, that his Lordſhip was particularly engaged, but would, if poſſible, return in the evening. I was ordered likewiſe to accompany the groom to my Lord, though he was forbidden to inform me on what occaſion; nor did I, till I ſaw him in bed, know any thing of the accident. He then deſired to be left alone with me, and ſaid, "I have purpoſely ſent for you, that in the moſt guarded and cautious manner you may inform your Lady of the accident. I would have

have written to her, but it is my right arm that is diſabled, and had reſolved to return to the caſtle this night; but Sir John Campbell, from a miſtaken kindneſs, has refuſed the uſe of his coach. Tell her that my anxiety on her account is ſuperior to every other conſideration; that it is my requeſt ſhe will not alarm herſelf; and aſſure her, that I will to-morrow return to her. Come, therefore, with my coach early in the morning, and keep the accident a ſecret from the family. Account for my abſence, by ſaying, that I am particularly engaged."

Johnſon continued.

"I ventured to requeſt his Lordſhip not to think of a removal; but he ſternly ſaid, I will not ſuffer my orders in this caſe to be diſputed, for I would not ſubmit to a month's confinement, at this diſtance from your Lady, for the poſſeſſion of worlds."

The worthy man expreſſed the utmoſt concern at the Earl's determination, aſſuring

ring me, the faculty abſolutely diſapproved of it, knowing that it muſt be attended with the utmoſt danger, and fearing a fever, the unavoidable conſequence of his removal. This information added freſh poignancy to my affliction. To know that for me he would incur ſuch inconvenience, ſuch imminent danger, nay, even hazard his life, were reflections too exquiſitely painful to be ſupported; I reſolved, therefore, to write to him, and make it my requeſt that he would not riſk his removal. I entreated him to be guided by the judgement of his ſurgeons, and aſſured him, that I would endeavour to be eaſy under our ſeparation, in the ardent hope that it might contribute to his recovery. This letter was the undiſguiſed dictates of the heart, and plainly expreſſed the feelings by which it was actuated.

How ſeverely at this moment do I regret the unfortunate prejudice which prevents his acknowledging me; but for that circumſtance I might have flown to him, and with unremitting attention watched over his bed.

of ſickneſs, and by participation alleviated his pain. Dreadful is the contraſt to which, in my preſent ſituation, I am condemned. The tedious interval of his abſence I muſt paſs in a melancholy ſolitude, tormented by a thouſand fears for his ſafety: and if he returns, muſt endure the agonizing reflections, that for me his life is endangered.

It is now two o'clock in the afternoon, and ſtill I remain in a ſtate of painful uncertainty. Never did I perceive time creep ſo ſlowly. I have repeatedly ſent Mrs. Johnſon to gain ſome intelligence; but as the whole family are ignorant of the accident, ſhe fears by particular enquiry, to create ſuſpicion. I have paſſed almoſt the whole morning on the ramparts in the hope of ſeeing Johnſon. I dare not (after the dreadful ſentence) ſuffer the idea of the Earl's return to intrude; that would be adding to my preſent diſtreſs, an additional weight of miſery.

I am

I am this inſtant informed of his arrival. He ſent Johnſon to acquaint me with it, and to ſay, that as ſoon as he can diſmiſs his ſurgeons, he ſhall requeſt to ſee me. He had choſen the hour when his family were aſſembled to dinner, by which means he was conveyed quiet, and without interruption, to his apartment. Johnſon aſſured me, that he appeared in good ſpirits, and expreſſed the utmoſt pleaſure at his return.

About an hour after the Earl arrived, Johnſon came with his requeſt that I would attend him. I followed him immediately down the ſtair caſe, and through his ſtudy and dreſſing-room to his bedchamber. He received me with rapturous pleaſure, repeatedly thanked me for the letter I had ſent him, which had confirmed his hopes of poſſeſſing my affections, and declared, that the happineſs of ſeeing me had made him inſenſible of any pain; but the feveriſh quickneſs which his eyes expreſſed, and frequently varying change of countenance, diſcovered

diſcovered the anguiſh which, though he exerted himſelf to conceal, he viſibly endured. He informed me, that he had already made the neceſſary arrangements, that he might have the pleaſure of my company without fear of an interruption. He had forbidden the viſits of his ſurgeon and phyſician (who will remain in the caſtle), except when he deſires their attendance; had poſitively declined ſeeing any of his friends; and had appointed Johnſon and his wife to attend on him. His orders are ſo decidedly expreſſed, that they neither admit of argument or oppoſition.

The anxiety of my mind was too apparent to eſcape his obſervation, and with affectionate tenderneſs he endeavoured to ſooth and compoſe my fears, converſing with his accuſtomed ſpirit and vivacity. This exertion I conſidered too dangerous to be indulged, and therefore (as the ſurgeon was to remain with him during the night) retired early to my apartment.

I have

I have paſſed thoſe hours tormented by a thouſand apprehenſions, dreading leſt a fever might enſue; and miſerable in the reflection, that from his ſolicitude and affection for me the alarming circumſtance may too probably be occaſioned. On our firſt acquaintance he would not have been the object of my choice, but his tenderneſs and unceaſing efforts to oblige, have awakened my affection, and given him the abſolute poſſeſſion of my heart: and if now it is my misfortune to be deprived of him, I ſhall be left in a ſituation, of all others, the moſt diſtreſſing, in the expectation of becoming a parent to a fatherleſs child.—I have hitherto concealed the circumſtance, from my fears that it might be received unfavourably by the Earl, and, perhaps, occaſion him uneaſineſs, as it probably would defeat his darling plan of ſecreſy. Now it is a conſideration which augments the diſtreſs of your

CAROLINE.

IN

IN CONTINUATION.

September 28.

TOO prophetic, my dear Louiſa, were my apprehenſions. A violent fever has for two days been rapidly increaſing, and the Earl is conſidered by his phyſicians in great danger. He is but too well acquainted with his ſituation, and his anxious ſolicitude for me agitates his mind, and increaſes his diſorder. I am never abſent from him, except during the viſits of his phyſicians; for my nights, though unknown to him, have been ſpent on the ſofa in his dreſſing-room. In conſideration of my health, he has never permitted my remaining with him during the night, though

though he declares his every comfort ariſes from my ſociety. He has requeſted that I will ſend for Agatha, but that conſolation is denied me; for by her laſt letter I find that ſhe intended to make a tour in the Hebrides, and ſhould not be ſufficiently ſtationary to receive my letters for at leaſt a month.

Severely he reflects on himſelf for delaying to make ſome proviſion for me, aſſuring me, that it was his intention to place a ſum of money in the bank for my uſe, and had actually remitted it to his banker in London for that purpoſe, though he had neglected to give him the neceſſary orders.—He then ſaid,

"Lulled, my Caroline, into forgetfulneſs by my paſt happineſs, I have been inattentive to the concern neareſt my heart—your future comforts: if, therefore, it is the will of Providence at this period to terminate my exiſtence—how will the awful moments of my ſeparation from you be

imbittered by my reflections, that I leave you unprovided. My inability to write diſtracts me: I cannot beſtow on you any bequeſt, by will, that is not admiſſible of diſpute; for you have no right to any name by which you could claim the legacy."

Then ordering Johnſon to open his cabinet, he directed him to deliver to me all the money and whatever bank-notes he might find. He bade him ſecure for me all that was valuable in my apartments, and addreſſing him with the moſt awful ſolemnity, he continued,

"I conjure, entreat, command you to devote your whole attention to your lady—convey her with care and ſecreſy from the caſtle—let your wife attend her, nor quit her till you ſee her ſafe with Agatha; greatly would it relieve my mind if I could reſign you to her protection. Write inſtantly, then, and let a ſervant follow her with

with the utmoſt expedition, nor return till he has found her."

Thoſe orders were on the point of being executed, when moſt fortunately he received a letter from Dr. Gordon, informing him, that he had travelled as far in the North as Durham, to ſee an old acquaintance, and that he would extend his journey into Scotland, to viſit him and his friends in the caſtle.

The Earl deſired me inſtantly to write in his name, informing him of the accident, and to requeſt that he will immediately accompany the ſervant.

He expreſſes the higheſt ſatisfaction at this circumſtance, and my hopes are, in ſome meaſure, revived by it. The fracture, I am aſſured, is attended with every favourable ſymptom, and his phyſicians allow that his diſorder principally ariſes from the agitation of his mind, though they are un-

conſcious of the cauſe. His impatience, however, for Dr. Gordon's arrival now increaſes his fever, and he continually expreſſes his apprehenſions leſt he ſhould arrive too late.

"Could I but live to ſee him, (he cried,) he would aſſiſt me with his advice, to make ſome proviſion for you."

I entreated him to compoſe his ſpirits, nor think of me.

"Not think of you, my Caroline! (he paſſionately exclaimed.) You, from whom I have derived the only happineſs I have ever known—who are dearer to me than life——Never, while memory holds her ſeat, will your loved image be eraſed from my mind."

My ſufferings are not leſs acute, and my mind continually reverts to the horror of my ſituation, if my alarming fears are realized—

realized—a ſtate far more wretched than that from which the Earl reſcued me—my character was then untainted—my name without reproach—now, appearances are too ſtrong to admit of palliation; and, bound by the ſacred promiſe which the Earl enjoined, no worldly conſideration ſhould tempt me to diſcloſe my marriage. I muſt be, therefore, expoſed to all the calumny of a misjudging world, without the power to refute the cruel ſlander; whilſt the unfortunate infant, the lawful inheritor,—perhaps the heir to immenſe poſſeſſions, muſt be hid in obſcurity, expoſed to poverty and diſtreſs, and ſhare every odium beſtowed on its unhappy mother—Oh, my Louiſa; can any ſtate be more calamitous than that which threatens your unhappy friend,

CAROLINE.

In CONTINUATION.

Narſby Caſtle, October 1.

AFTER having paſſed two days in a ſtate of incredible diſtreſs (the Earl's anxiety having wholly baniſhed reſt or compoſure, and his diſorder every hour increaſing) I was laſt evening, in ſome reſpect, conſoled by the arrival of Dr. Gordon. He was immediately conducted to the Earl's apartment, who received him with viſible pleaſure, declaring, that the ſight of him relieved his mind from a weight of care. My worthy friend met me with the affection of a parent; and while the ſilent tear ſtole down my cheek, his

his eyes overflowed with kind commiſeration.

Concluding the Earl would wiſh an unreſerved converſation with him, I withdrew to the ſtudy. I had paſſed an hour in a ſtate of miſery more exquiſite than imagination can form, or language deſcribe, when the Doctor came to me—he addreſſed me with mingled tenderneſs and concern, and after enforcing every argument, and exhorting me by all the dictates of religion to ſubmit with reſignation to the Divine decree; he told me, the Earl had enjoined him to prepare me to expect the awful change.

"He has (he continued) conſulted his phyſicians, and has compelled them to acquaint him with their opinion. They have told him, that twenty-four hours is the lateſt period, unleſs a very favourable criſis takes place. His chaplain is now with him; ſoon, therefore, as he leaves

him, and you can acquire ſufficient reſolution, he wiſhes to take (as he fears) an eternal leave of you. Summon, therefore, my child, all your fortitude at this awful trial, and reflect that on the compoſure of his mind, reſts our only remaining hope of his recovery."

I will not attempt to deſcribe my feelings at this dreadful confirmation of my fears, nor the agonizing ſenſations I experienced on entering his apartment. I found him tranquil and reſigned, while, with every effort that tenderneſs could dictate, he exerted himſelf to comfort and conſole me.

Then offering to me a paper, he ſaid,

" Receive this, my love, as my laſt legacy, which, though infinitely inadequate to your merit or my affection, yet will ſecure you from the frowns of fortune. Accept my thanks, my bleſſing, for every hour of happineſs you have beſtowed upon me;

me; and if I have ever occaſioned you one ſigh, now pardon and forgive me."

He then, addreſſing Dr. Gordon, ſaid,

" To you, my worthy friend, I conſign my ſoul's dear treaſure—my beloved wife. Protect and guard her with parental care from every danger—every alluring ſnare to which her youth and innocence might be expoſed——And, oh! thou merciful God, in this hour of trial, aſſiſt, ſupport, and comfort her; ſhower thy choiceſt bleſſings on her head; and grant that the tranquillity of her future life may compenſate for all her paſt unhappineſs."

After a pauſe, he added,

" How peculiarly ſevere is my Caroline's lot: again is ſhe conſigned by a dying huſband, to the hands of friendſhip."

He would then have continued in converſation, giving the Doctor repeated in-

junctions concerning me; the dictates of love and tenderneſs; but I interrupted him, ſaying,

"If, my lord, I am dear to you, give me now the moſt convincing proof of your regard, by complying with my requeſt.—I know the Phyſicians have reaſon to hope for a favourable change, if you could obtain a few hours reſt. Endeavour, therefore, for my ſake, to compoſe yourſelf, and do not, by your preſent anxiety for me, deprive me of every chance of future comfort."

"You have given me (he replied) an undeniable motive—but I know not how to part from you—I even dread to cloſe theſe eyes, leſt they might never again behold all they delight to gaze on."

I aſſured him that I would not leave him. Dr. Gordon likewiſe declared his reſolution of remaining with him during the night. Seating myſelf, therefore, by the

the bedſide, I waited with trembling anxiety for that criſis, on which my every comfort depended.

In a ſhort time I had the happineſs to find that he enjoyed the bleſſing of undiſturbed and tranquil repoſe; and after having ſlept for ſeveral hours, he awoke refreſhed and compoſed. His firſt conſideration was, leſt my health ſhould be injured by my attendance on him.

Then addreſſing Dr. Gordon, he ſaid,

"I have occaſioned you, my friend, much trouble and anxiety, but I will beſtow on you a high reward, for you ſhall be my deareſt Caroline's gueſt. Accompany her, then, to her apartments, where you may breakfaſt, and give me the ſatisfaction of knowing when you return, that ſhe is retired to reſt."

I requeſted that he would admit his phyſicians, and remained in the ſtudy till

Dr. Gordon had learnt their opinion. He communicated to me the happy tidings that the alarming criſis was paſt, and every flattering ſymptom had ſucceeded.

I then conducted him to my apartments. He remarked the elegance and magnificence with which they were decorated, and ſaid,

"I ſcarcely know, my dear, whether I muſt condole with or congratulate you upon your preſent ſituation. Your ſeclusion from the world is certainly to be lamented, but the abſolute poſſeſſion which you have gained of the Earl's affection, muſt afford you happineſs even in your retirement."

I aſſured him that I had never felt the loſs of liberty, nor, till this accident, had experienced one uneaſy ſenſation.

"You give me great pleaſure (he replied) by this declaration; and let me tell you,

you, though I knew him to be generous and grateful, I never ſuſpected that his heart was formed for love; but I now find, that having been hitherto cloſely guarded againſt the intruſion of the ſofter paſſions, his affections centre in you with unreſtrained tenderneſs; and that heart, which has ſteadily reſiſted all the attractions of your ſex, is now wholly devoted to you alone."

He afterwards related the converſation which had paſſed the preceding evening.

" On your retiring, he earneſtly requeſted me to point out ſome means by which he might ſecure a proviſion for you, and in ſevere terms reflected on himſelf for having hitherto neglected it, aſſerting, that if he was now deprived of life, you would be unavoidably deſtitute."

To this I replied,

" As ſuch, my Lord, would be her ſituatio

ſituation, you will, doubtleſs, immediately acknowledge her. It is fortunate that you have ſufficient witneſſes preſent to render it undiſputed; and ſhould ſhe then have the misfortune to be deprived of you, the law would do her juſtice, and make a liberal proviſion for her ſupport.

" At this awful moment, (he replied,) when every earthly diſtinction fades before the vaſt and important concerns of eternity, believe me, I would not hefitate, if convinced it would contribute to the happineſs of my beloved Caroline: but I have attentively weighed every circumſtance. I know her unambitious mind could derive no comfort from a ſolitary title; and (though ſhe has diſcretion and prudence beyond her ſex) her youth and beauty would be more expoſed to dangers, by being placed in that conſpicuous ſtation. In my preſent ſituation I am likewiſe incapacitated from the neceſſary inveſtigation of my affairs, to ſecure to her a jointure ſuited

to

to her rank; and think how ſeverely it muſt imbitter the few remaining hours of my life, to reflect that the gentle ſpirits of my Caroline muſt contend in litigation with my relations, who, having long conſidered my fortune their own, would, from diſappointment and avarice, purſue the cauſe through every court of law, in order to invalidate her claims."

He then mentioned the ſum of money depoſited with his banker, which he had always intended for your uſe. I adviſed him to give you an order for it, and ſolemnly promiſed to accompany you to London, and negociate the buſineſs for you. He approved of this plan, and at his requeſt I wrote the order. To prevent his ſignature, likewiſe, from being diſputed, I deſired his phyſicians to witneſs it. From the whole converſation I am led to hope that hereafter he will acknowledge you; his former prejudices were not once mentioned; and though, perhaps, ſome lurking

lurking particles of the "ruling paſſion" dictated his objections, yet tenderneſs, concern, and affection, were the only apparent motives.

He afterwards aſked if I had examined the paper which the Earl had given me. I aſſured him I had not, but now found it was a draft for fifty thouſand pounds. The Doctor then deſired me to retire, nor would leave my apartments till aſſured by Mrs. Johnſon I had complied with his requeſt. But finding even the ſoul-cheering cordial *hope* inſufficient to calm my agitated ſpirits—and that ſleep

"Swift on his downy pinion flies from woe,
"And lights on lids unſullied with a tear."

I aroſe, determined to devote thoſe hours to friendſhip which, from the perturbation of my mind, I found impoſſible to reſign to reſt. I am now in expectation of Dr. Gordon, who will dine with me; after which I ſhall return to the Earl. It

was

was his requeſt that I would not viſit him till that time, deſirous, that during the intermediate ſpace I might enjoy ſome repoſe.

I am now ſummoned. Adieu, my Louiſa; believe me affectionately,

Your friend

CAROLINE.

In CONTINUATION.

Narſby Caſtle, October 30.

I HAVE been during the paſt month too conſtantly, and I may add too happily engaged, to devote the ſmalleſt portion of time to my pen,—My Lord (and by a far dearer title let me acknowledge him) my beloved huſband, has been long ſince out of danger, and all my paſt diſtreſs is amply overpaid by his returning health. I ſcarcely knew the extent of my affection till at the awful moment I believed his death inevitable; but as my affliction was then too poignant for concealment, ſo is his gratitude and tenderneſs beyond deſcription. Repeatedly he has declared that he ſhall ever rejoice

joice at an accident which has inconteſtably proved that he was the poſſeſſor of my heart, the doubt of which has been the only allay to his happineſs.—He has removed to his dreſſing room, and politeneſs requires that he ſhould receive the viſits of his friends, but thoſe he confines to the morning; I therefore dine and paſs the remainder of the day with him.

November 8th.

I am again returned to my apartments, and the Earl is now my viſitor. I am happy to ſay that he is quite recovered, and ſcarcely feels inconvenience from the late dreadful accident: Again we reſume to thoſe delightful amuſements, which by having been ſo painfully interrupted, now afford additional delight: he generally invites Dr. Gordon to accompany him,—and that kind friend frequently viſits me during the mornings when the Earl has engagements. He is however diſſatisfied with my ſecluſion, and

and cannot forbear expreſſing his diſpleaſure to me. Yeſterday he ſaid:

"I can ſcarcely conceal my ſentiments from him, for I conſider his conduct a reflection on his underſtanding."

Let me requeſt, my kind friend, I replied, that you will leave the reſult to the Earl's determination. I would owe every favour to his affection and generoſity, and to the conviction of his mind on the juſtice and propriety of the meaſure. I ſhould be for ever unhappy if merely at the interpoſition of my friends, he acceded to what his judgement diſapproved.

"Well (he anſwered) I will for the preſent leave him to you. With aſtoniſhment I behold the aſcendancy you have acquired over him. He who before never ſuffered an opinion to be advanced in oppoſition to his deciſion, now is wholly directed by your advice. He is guided by your judgement, —adopts your opinions,—and makes your appro-

approbation the ruling principle of his actions. His manners too are ſoftened by your example; he is become affable, condeſcending, and conſiderate. Could I but ſee him ſurmount this fooliſh prejudice, I ſhould congratulate you on having converted to rationality, the proudeſt heart that ever beat within a human breaſt."

The Doctor is, you know, ſuperior to flattery; I may therefore credit what from deliberate obſervation he pronounces. I cannot form a judgement of his change of conduct towards others, but with reſpect to myſelf I can aſſert, that tenderneſs, gratitude, and affection, are conſpicuous in every word and action—A-propos, he has juſt preſented to me the transfer for the fifty thouſand pounds which he has placed in the ſtocks, as a future proviſion for me.

Nov. 14.

Doctor Gordon payed me a viſit this morning, and (as ſome pleaſurable excurſion had

had been adopted by the company who are reſidents here) he expreſſed more than uſual warmth at my confinement, adding "When I ſurvey the gay parties collected in the caſtle, and ſee them enjoying the pleaſures reſulting from various amuſements, and ſocial intercourſe, I cannot with patience reflect on the contraſt in your ſituation; that you who are entitled to fill the moſt diſtinguiſhed place in this family, ſhould be wholly excluded from thoſe comforts, and muſt paſs each ſucceeding day in a total deprivation of liberty. I cannot longer refrain from a ſerious remonſtrance on the ſubject, for by my ſilence I give a ſanction to the prepoſterous abſurdity."

I earneſtly requeſted that he would leave the Earl to his unbiaſed determinations, aſſuring him that I was perfectly reconciled to, and even happy in my ſecluſion.

"You are an excellent creature (he replied) and deſerve the higheſt honours he

can

can beſtow upon you. This I am convinced he thinks, though he has not reſolution to deſtroy the chimerical plan he has raiſed."

He then added.

"I wiſh to know, when next month the meeting of Parliament will require his attendance in London, how he propoſes to diſpoſe of you."

This circumſtance had wholly eſcaped my recollection; but at the inſtant my ſituation recurred with every diſtreſſing reflection to my mind, and the certainty of being deprived at ſuch a period, as my confinement, of his ſociety, which had been the only charm to render my ſolitude delightful, occaſioned ſo immediate a change of countenance, and ſuch apparent agitation and diſtreſs, that the Doctor perceived it, and eagerly enquired the cauſe of my emotion. With ſome reluctance I informed him of my ſituation, and was gently reproved by him, for my paſt concealment, obſerving,

"You

"You have, my dear, in this caſe acted very wrong, and for the firſt time I now feel diſpoſed to blame you. Suppoſe the event, which with but too much reaſon we expected, had really happened, you would have deprived his child of its lawful inheritance, though in that caſe, I ſhould have conſidered every promiſe cancelled, and would have boldly aſſerted the claims of the helpleſs orphan. You muſt now leave this diſcovery to me; I well know him, and will watch the favourable opportunity. I, however, draw the happieſt inference from this circumſtance; for I am convinced no prejudice, though even firmly rooted, will ever render him unjuſt; and he will feel leſs degradation in acknowledging all your anceſtors, than in concealing his child.—Your merit will, therefore, I hope, be ſoon rewarded, by his making you the declared partner of his rank and fortune, as he has already beſtowed on you the abſolute poſſeſſion of his heart."

All

All his efforts are, however, ineffectual, to relieve my mind from apprehenſion. Should the Earl continue inflexible, and at the approaching period doom me to this ſolitude; how heavily, (deprived of his ſociety) will the dreaded interval paſs. My child, too, if deſtitute of a father's protection, muſt be abandoned to the care of ſtrangers; dreadful reflection! one conſolation however ariſes even in this diſtreſs. My Agatha is near me, ſhe is ſo affectionately conſiderate, and on every occaſion thinks ſo juſtly, that from her advice I muſt derive comfort; ſhe is now with a friend about fifteen miles from hence, and at my requeſt, will, I know, haſten to me.

This I conſider the criſis, and a ſhort time muſt now determine the fate of my Louiſa's unalterable friend

CAROLINE.

In CONTINUATION.

Narſby Caſtle, Nov. 16.

FROM the purport of my laſt, you probably expect what I have now to communicate; without any comment, therefore, I will continue my narrative.

Two days after the preceding converſation with the Doctor, the Earl took leave of me in the morning, telling me he was going an airing, though I did not know that he had requeſted my worthy friend to accompany him. In his words, I will in this place relate the converſation, as it will more regularly lead you to the event.

We

"We had travelled, ſaid the Doctor, about ſix miles, diſcourſing on various topics, without my finding any opening to introduce the ſubject on which I was moſt intereſted; after a pauſe, however, I ſaid, Pray, my Lord, when do you leave Scotland?

"He immediately replied,

"Really, Sir, I am at a loſs to anſwer your queſtion; the approaching meeting of parliament requires my return to London; for I have always conſidered, that it is the indiſpenſable duty of every member of the Britiſh Senate to be conſtant and regular in his attendance. But my Caroline has ſo firm a poſſeſſion of my heart, and her loved ſociety has ſo long conſtituted all my happineſs, that, for the firſt time, I waver in my determination, nor can form the reſolution to leave her.

I expreſſed my ſatisfaction at his happineſs, and he thus continued:

"In her is united every charm that can adorn her ſex; ſhe is the elegant accompliſhed companion; the ſenſible affectionate friend; the endearing wife; my every comfort is derived from her; and I confeſs the very idea of a ſeparation is too painful to be endured."

"I would aſk, my Lord, why you inflict on yourſelf a puniſhment ſo ſevere as your ſeparation muſt occaſion, but I know your motives; know that your prejudices are intetwover with your very exiſtence, and are too ſtrongly rooted ever to be eradicated."

"You, Doctor, will be ſurpriſed to find they every hour grow weaker, and I readily allow that the merit of my Caroline amply compenſates for the obſcurity of her anceſtors. In ſhort all my reaſonings on the ſubject end ſo decidedly in her favour, that I am

am inclined to believe at a future period I ſhall acknowledge her."

"For your own ſake, my Lord, do not let the time be *very* diſtant, leſt the legitimacy of your child ſhould be diſputed."

He looked on me with the moſt expreſſive pleaſure, then ſaid,

"My dear friend, are you ſerious, has Caroline authorized you to make this diſcovery?"

"She has, My Lord; hitherto ſhe has been ſilent, for knowing your decided reſolutions reſpecting her, ſhe feared to communicate what will moſt probably occaſion your concern and embarraſſment. But anxiety for the fate of the unfortunate infant, whom doubtleſs you will not acknowledge, is now the ſource of uneaſineſs too painful for longer concealment; and as this event will probably happen in your abſence,

it is neceſſary ſhe ſhould be informed how ſhe muſt diſpoſe of the child."

"Diſown my child,—gracious Heaven! —Can you—can ſhe believe me ſo inhuman?—What!—Abandon my offspring—the lineal deſcendant of my illuſtrious anceſtors! Longer concealment would be criminal. I will this inſtant return, and relieve her mind from every anxious apprehenſion, and this day will place her in the rank ſhe is ſo juſtly entitled to fill."

He immediately ordered the carriage to return with the utmoſt expedition; and as you know his commands are always literally obeyed, I was in conſtant apprehenſion that our journey would have been retarded by our precipitation; for I was in minutely expectation of being overſet. While thus with velocity we meaſured back the road, our converſation was wholly engaged by the intereſting diſcovery, and

repeatedly

repeatedly he thanked me for the happineſs I had communicated to him.

" I am ſhocked, my friend, (he obſerved), when I reflect that I have been on the verge of committing an act of cruelty and injuſtice: had it been the will of Providence to terminate my exiſtence before your arrival, I ſhould have doomed the wife I adore, and my helpleſs infant, to poverty and diſtreſs."

He then conſulted me reſpecting his marriage, and ſaid,

" As it was attended with ſuch ſecreſy as well as ambiguity, I will (after making a proper ſettlement on her) have the ceremony performed in the moſt public manner—though, to prevent even the ſhadow of an aſperſion, the marriage already celebrated ſhall be unqueſtionably proved."

On his leaving me he apologized for his abrupt departure; but ſaid, (and for the

firſt time that I was ever gratified with the ſound),

"I am impatient to viſit the Counteſs."

The Doctor continued:

"Thus then, my dear, you find that this boaſted pride of family has even contributed to your happineſs, for to this *lineal deſcendant of the illuſtrious anceſtors*, you are indebted for an immediate acknowledgment, which not your merit joined to his affection would probably for ſome time have procured you. Be however aſſured, that it is on full conviction of the juſtice and propriety of the meaſure."

The Earl on quitting the Doctor came to my apartments—I was ſitting in my dreſſing room, ruminating on the peculiar ſeverity of my fate, and freely indulging thoſe emotions, which my apprehenſion of a ſeparation from him had principally occaſioned.

The

The doors of all the apartments were open, purpoſely to attend to my Harriet, who was amuſing herſelf with running through the rooms.

As ſoon, therefore, as he quitted the anti-chamber he ſaw me, though unconſcious of being obſerved, my tears flowed unreſtrained—nor was I ſenſible of his approach, till my child, with her accuſtomed eagerneſs and pleaſure called on her "dear papa."--The effort to conceal my tears was unavailing, an attempt at ſmiles could not hide the traces of affliction.

He haſtened to me—claſped me with fondneſs to his heart; and while every fine feature was animated by a glow of pleaſure, paſſionately exclaimed,

"My love! my adored Caroline! forgive I entreat the anxiety I have occaſioned you; moſt ſeverely, though I allow juſtly, am I puniſhed, by being the wit-

neſs of thoſe tears, and happy—exquiſitely happy I ſhall conſider myſelf, if by making you the declared partner of my rank and title, I can compenſate for the diſtreſs which I have occaſioned you."

He then informed me of his converſation with Dr. Gordon, and added,

"It is therefore my determination to preſent this day to my friends, and to acknowledge to the world my Caroline, as my wife, my charming Counteſs."

This reſolution, ſo ſudden, ſo unexpected, occaſioned me the utmoſt ſurprife, and my ſpirits, depreſſed by my former reflections, could ſcarcely ſuſtain the various emotions which I now experienced. I however with truth and energy aſſured him—

"My gratification, my Lord, ariſes from the certainty, that as your declared wife

wife I ſhall not be compelled to endure a ſeparation from you; this beſtows on me more happineſs than all the titled honors you can ſhower upon me.

He remained with me till it was time to dreſs, and then told me he would return to introduce me to his friends, prior to the hour of dinner. It was neceſſary likewiſe that I ſhould devote ſome time to the toilet, that my appearance might not diſgrace the character I was publicly to aſſume, but an unuſual attention was not requiſite. Early I perceived it was the Earl's choice that my dreſs ſhould be always conſiſtent with his rank—my ſecluſion therefore never rendered me inattentive to his wiſhes, and as it was evident that I dreſſed for him alone, he was ever pleaſed and gratified by my compliance. On this occaſion I choſe a ſilver muſlin, over white ſatin, which I had purpoſely made to receive his firſt viſit after his recovery.—I have already

already told you that he had preſented to me an elegant ſet of pearls, on my arrival at the caſtle.

He rejoined me at the appointed hour, and appeared with unuſual vivacity and pleaſure, while in delightful converſation he beguiled the time, deſcribing in the moſt ſpirited manner the various characters to whom he ſhould introduce me.

He told me Lady Stewart had hitherto preſided at his table, and requeſted my particular attention to an Italian family of diſtinction, with whom he wiſhed me to converſe in their native language. He likewiſe ſaid, that it was his intention to propoſe a concert for the evening's amuſement, at which he hoped I would aſſiſt. This I found would be a day of trial—but anxious not to diſcredit his choice, I made every effort to attain reſolution. We were engaged in converſation when the firſt bell

bell rang; then taking my hand, he ſaid,

"Let me now, my love, reſtore you to the world, from which too long my blamable prejudice has ſecluded you. At this ſummons all the company aſſemble in the ſaloon, and there I ſhall with pleaſure, with pride, preſent to them my wife—my deareſt Caroline; though, in future, that name which I never pronounce without an emotions of pleaſure, muſt be relinquiſhed for your title, to which you have an undoubted claim."

"If, my Lord, (I replied), for an acknowledged rank, I muſt experience the ſmalleſt diminution of your affection, ſeclude me for ever in thoſe apartments, where it has been my ſupreme felicity to reflect, that I am dear to you."

He embraced me with tenderneſs; then ſaid,

"My affection is founded on the moſt permanent baſis, on the knowledge of your worth—the hourly confirmation of your excellence; but to ſecure to you the reſpect which your rank demands, my conduct muſt ſet the example."

He then led me down ſtairs and through his apartments to a long gallery, where were ranged in regular ſucceſſion, the portraits of this ennobled family; and while, in paſſing, I ſurveyed the blazoned arms, and pompous hereditary titles, by which they were diſtinguiſhed, I felt pained at reflecting on my obſcure and humble origin.

This ſenſation did not eſcape the Earl's penetration, who conſiderately ſaid,

"This gallery will be incomplete, till the portrait of my deareſt wife is added to my family."

We afterwards went down the great ſtaircaſe, and through the hall to the ſaloon. This room was I perceived filled with company; the Earl, however, led me to the upper end, where Lady Stewart was ſeated, and addreſſing her, ſaid,

"Your Ladyſhip will permit me to introduce to you the Counteſs of Narſby, to whom for ſeveral months I have been married. Reaſons which no longer exiſt, have hitherto occaſioned it to be a ſecret, but I am now happy to preſent to my friends, by my name and title, a lady, whoſe merit will ever render her an honour to my family."

He then ſeverally introduced to me the large party which were aſſembled. From his introduction no doubt can be entertained but that I was received with every proof of attention and reſpect.

I, however, obſerved with ſurpriſe the effect

effect which the Earl's uſual reſerve had on his gueſts: though my appearance in ſuch a character, muſt be a circumſtance the moſt unexpected and aſtoniſhing—yet, not a curious expreſſion was dropped, nor an inquiry made, which diſcovered a wiſh to know more than he choſe to inform them—and though no reſtraint appeared, their behaviour was evidently regulated by his example; this ſecured me from the curious gaze or unfeeling criticiſm, and enabled me to regain ſufficient compoſure to beſtow the neceſſary attentions on our gueſts.

When ſummoned to dinner, he led me to the table; and here I cannot omit mentioning Johnſon; he was in waiting on his Lord, and too much engaged by his attendance on him to regard the company; till, on ſome party being propoſed, the Counteſs of Narſby's approbation was requeſted; he ſtarted at the addreſs, and looking

looking at the upper end of the table, ſaw me: from an involuntary and inſtantaneous ſenſation he advanced towards me, and made a profound bow, with an expreſſion of countenance, in which joy was viſible, though corrected by reſpect and modeſty.

The Earl was pleaſed, and immediately ſaid,

"You have obliged me, Johnſon, by this public acknowledgment of your lady, and with pleaſure I give this teſtimony of my perfect approbation of your conduct."

After dinner he ſpoke to him in a low voice, when he immediately quitted the room, but ſoon returned leading my Harriet. Her ſurpriſe, at a ſight ſo new, made her approach with reluctance, nor would ſhe quit the hand of her conductor, with whom ſhe appeared anxious to retire, till on timidly looking around her, ſhe perceived

ceived the Earl. Pleaſure inſtantly enlivened her countenance, and, extending her little arms, ſhe flew to him, rapturouſly exclaiming, "My dear Papa."

He took her on his knee and careſſed her with parental fondneſs, calling her his dear—his adopted child."

In the evening, a concert being propoſed by him, he led the way to the muſic-room; this is a ſpacious and lofty apartment, in which various inſtruments are contained; my harp I likewiſe found was removed to it. The Earl, at the united requeſt of the company, played a leſſon on the organ, which he executed in a maſterly ſtyle. I was ſoon called upon, and he conſiderately ſelected what he knew was moſt familiar to, and approved by me. From timidity, however, I now performed with leſs ſpirit than uſual; but, if I had been a performer of the firſt excellence,

more

more extravagant approbation could not be beſtowed—a confirmation this, of the opinion I have ever entertained, that where fortune ſhowers her favours, applauſe will ever follow. A ſingle glance from the Earl, however, which demonſtrated that he approved, was far more gratifying than all the flattering encomiums which I received.

When we retired to my apartments for the night, he in the moſt obliging manner thanked me for the honour I had done him, adding,

"Surely, Caroline, I have paſt the former part of my life in a dream, and have been but lately awakened to the pleaſures of exiſtence. Never could my boaſted pride of birth and family diſtinction, beſtow the ſmalleſt part of that gratification, which I this day felt at ſeeing you—my charming wife, ſurrounded by my friends."

Having

Having informed you of all the particulars of this important day, it is time to conclude this long letter. I need not, my Louiſa, call for your congratulations; for I know, as you have ſhared the afflictions, ſo will you participate in the happineſs of your ever affectionate

CAROLINE.

IN

In CONTINUATION.

Narſby Caſtle.

On the following morning the Earl invited me to walk on the terrace, a broad gravel walk, which nearly ſurrounds the caſtle; the moat is beyond, but over it a ſmall bridge is thrown, to give acceſs to the park. Here we were ſoon joined by Dr. Gordon, who, with his uſual ſincerity and friendſhip congratulated me on my happineſs, freely beſtowing on my paſt conduct, that ſhare of praiſe, which from his kind partiality he thinks it deſerved; in which the Earl rapturouſly joined; and from their approbation I derived the pureſt pleaſure, for

"Sweet is praiſe from thoſe we love."

The

The Doctor afterwards ſaid,

"And I muſt tell your Lordſhip I never ſaw you appear to ſuch advantage;—your every look diſcovered the attentive obliging huſband; and while careſſing our little Harriet, the tender parent—your heart, therefore, approves your recent reſolution."

He anſwered,

"The reaſon is obvious, my good friend; I never felt ſo happy."

We ſtrolled here till the hour of breakfaſt, when I again met the ſame party. Various excurſions were planned for the amuſement of the morning, all of which were ſubmitted for my deciſion; but the Earl ſaid,

"I muſt requeſt the Counteſs will accompany me an airing."

Soon, therefore, his poſt chaiſe was at the door—but I cannot deſcribe my ſenſations,

ſations, when I contraſted my preſent ſituation with all the painful reflections which I felt on entering the ſubterraneous vaults of this caſtle. I was then to meet the man, whom imagination had repreſented the lordly tyrant, and whoſe ſeverity I dreaded ſtill more than the gloomy priſon to which he had conſigned me; now, at liberty, I was ſeated by the huſband of my affections, to whom I was equally dear, who, happy in acknowledging me, not only to his friends, but had ordered his carriage to drive ſlowly through the courts, that his aſſembled ſervants might behold their lady.

Again I paſſed through the avenue of trees, where expoſed to all the fury of the elements, their gloom had filled me with horror; now, though leafleſs, in every tree I could perceive beauty, and even the heath which had appeared a barren waſte, a ſcene of dreary horror, was now converted to a beautifully variegated plain. From ourſelves

ourſelves therefore—from internal ſerenity our comforts muſt ariſe. In the bliſsful hour of pleaſure, we view the blooming proſpects with delight—the gay parterre, and each enlivening ſcene, receive additional beauty from the correſpondent feelings of the heart. Let but diſtreſs or affliction intervene, to blight our happy proſpects, the pleaſing landſcape can no longer charm, but all partake the gloomy complexion of a deſponding mind.

To reverſe the portrait—

"My boſom's lord ſat lightly on its throne;"

Which gave to even the ſterility of winter, a charm beyond what vernal ſpring could boaſt.

The Earl, who had been attentive to the various emotions which my countenance expreſſed, ſaid,

"I perceive, Caroline, that I have been even cruel in my conduct towards you;

you; for from the pleaſure which you diſcover at the enjoyment of liberty, the deprivation muſt have coſt you very dear; again then, I requeſt you to forgive me, and be aſſured my gratitude will continue to the lateſt period of my exiſtence, for your patient acquieſcence to my will."

I informed him of my paſt reflections, and added,

"It is your affection and ſociety, my dear Lord, which render every ſcene delightful. Wretched when I entered this caſtle, from my apprehenſions of you—I am now the happieſt of women in the certainty of poſſeſſing your heart.

We had four horſes to the chaiſe, and travelled with more expedition than I thought conſiſtent with the uſual mode of airings, but I felt too much pleaſure to pay attention to the circumſtance, for

"With *him* converſing, I forgot all time,
"All ſeaſons and their change."

But having paſſed through a town, one of the ſervants rode forward to an houſe, which, though ſmall, was conſpicuouſly neat, and, on his making ſome inquiries, the carriage ſtopped.

The Earl then ſaid,

" Prepare, my love, for a gentle ſurpriſe; this, for the preſent, is the reſidence of our Agatha; I am deſirous of convincing her, that I have releaſed 'the bird from her gilded cage.' "

We alighted at the gate, and walked through the garden to the houſe; for as it was his intention to ſurpriſe her, he had forbidden his ſervants to announce him. She, therefore, joined us in the parlour, in the expectation of ſeeing two of her friends, without entertaining the remoteſt idea, that in one ſhe ſhould find the long ſecluded Caroline. On perceiving me, therefore, aſtoniſhment was viſible on her countenance, which was inſtantly ſucceeded by

by the moſt lively and animated expreſſion of pleaſure; ſhe affectionately embraced me, and congratulated me with that warmth of friendſhip ſo expreſſive of her feelings. Then turning to the Earl (who ſilently though with delight attended to the ſcene) ſhe offered him her hand and ſaid,

"From my heart I thank thee for the happineſs thou haſt beſtowed on my friend. By reſtoring her to liberty thou haſt conferred on her the only bleſſing which could add to her felicity. The continuation of thy preſent enjoyments is all I need wiſh thee,—to expect an increaſe is beyond the lot of humanity."

He preſſed to his lips the hand he held, and replied,

"To you, charming Agatha, I acknowledge an obligation, which time can never eraſe from my memory,—you firſt awakened reflection,—you taught me to review my actions,—to ſearch to their ſource the motives for my conduct,—the retroſpect brought

conviction to my mind, but prejudices ſo fixed, ſo deeply rooted, were not eaſily eradicated—ſtill I wavered, nor could wholly conquer a weakneſs I now bluſh to reflect on—but an event, from which I expect even an increaſe of happineſs, taught me that by my paſt concealement, I might have been inhuman and unjuſt; my reſolution was then immediately fixed, and yeſterday I enjoyed the felicity of ſeeing my beloved wife ſurrounded by my friends; nor did I ever feel ſo proud, as when I conſidered myſelf the huſband of her affections."

We ſpent an hour with this eſtimable, this truly deſerving friend; and on parting we earneſtly requeſted to ſee her ſoon at the caſtle; the Earl added,

"I have your promiſe, Agatha, for this favour, for my wife fills the place in my family, to which ſhe is ſo juſtly entitled."

She, ſmiling, ſaid,

"I find my admonitions are written on thy

thy memory, and thank thee for the deference thou haſt paid to my opinion; ſuffer now thy Caroline to be thy monitor, ſhe has been taught in the ſchool of affliction to commiſerate the unfortunate and diſtreſſed, ſhe therefore will inſtruct thee to make thy fortune a bleſſing to thyſelf, and comfort to the children of miſery around thee."

The Earl deſired ſhe would haſten her viſit to the caſtle, ſaying he had formed many plans which he ſhould ſubmit to our opinion. She has promiſed to be with us in a week; within that period it is fixed that our marriage ſhall be publicly celebrated. Invitations are ſent to the families around, nor are the numerous tenants to be excluded. He is indefatigable in buſineſs, and has already given ſuch inſtructions that the ſettlements will be ready to ſign within the time I have mentioned. The proviſion that he has made for me, is with the ſame liberality as if my fortune had been equal to his rank. He has likewiſe inſiſted that the ſum

of money already inveſted in the bank for my uſe, ſhall be at my diſpoſal,—the family jewels which are modern ſet, and very valuable, he has preſented to me.

I ſhall not cloſe this letter till after the important event.

Nov. 24.

On the morning of the day which confirmed my happineſs, a numerous party aſſembled at the caſtle: they were unacquainted with the motives for the invitation, but on introducing me, the Earl circumſtantially mentioned our former marriage, and looking very proud, he added,

" What on my honour I aſſert will not I conclude be doubted, but were it neceſſary I could produce witneſſes. Dr. Gordon was preſent at the ceremony.

His deciſive tone of voice, and emphatic manner, intimidated, if it could not convince; the adulation, therefore, which was inſtantly paid

paid to me, proved that implicit faith was given to his aſſertion, though now as before no inquiry was made; even female curioſity was huſhed, reſpecting the motives for concealment, and my myſterious appearance in the caſtle.

At eight in the evening, the company attended us to the chapel. He had previouſly preſented me to Lord Stewart, ſaying,

"Let me, my Lord, from your hands receive this treaſure."

Dr. Gordon at our united requeſt performed the ceremony.

Thus am I unqueſtionably counteſs of Narſby. You, I am convinced, will rejoice at every circumſtance which can beſtow an increaſe of felicity on your friend; join with me however in the prayer, (the dictates of a heart deeply impreſſed with gratitude for the numerous bleſſings I enjoy) that my

elevation may never render me callous to the voice of affliction, inattentive to the misery and diſtreſs of thoſe who tread the humble paths of life, but with the power to relieve, may I ever feel correſpondent inclinations.

For the firſt time do I add to the endearing appellation of friend, the name and title of

CAROLINE NARSBY.

IN CONTINUATION.

Narſby Caſtle, Nov. 30.

THE neceſſary attentions which my now enlarged ſphere of life demand, deprive me of the pleaſure I have ever felt in the compliance with my Louiſa's requeſt, by a circumſtantial account of every event. I can only at ſhort and ſtated periods have recourſe to my pen, though I have an ample field to expatiate on, by deſcribing the various characters to whom I have been recently introduced; but as I have not time to do juſtice to ſo arduous a taſk, I muſt leave them to a future opportunity, and now merely inform you of thoſe events in which I am intereſted. Not the leaſt material is the

pleaſure which I derive from my dear Agatha's ſociety.

On her firſt introduction to the gay and faſhionable circle, her primitive ſtile of dreſs excited the contemptuous ſmile. They (like the world in general) had formed their judgement on external appearences, without reflecting that the moſt brilliant gem might be incloſed, within the ſimpleſt caſe. Her natural dignity, elegance of manners, and graceful behaviour, ſoon however claimed their notice, whilſt the diſtinguiſhed attentien of the Earl ſecured their reſpect. He has requeſted that ſhe will direct the eſtabliſhement of various inſtitutions, ſimilar to thoſe which ſhe patroniſes in the vicinity of Oak Farm. The peaſantry in this part of the kingdom are numerous; and when by ſickneſs or misfortunes, they are deprived of earning their ſcanty ſubſiſtence, are left neglected to all the horrors of poverty. The Earl has therefore reſolved to erect on the hitherto deſolate heath, aſylums

where the diſtreſſed and helpleſs might find an hoſpitable ſhelter; they are to aſſiſt in the cultivation of the ground, the produce of which is allotted to them as a reward for, and encouragement to, induſtry.

Various alterations are likewiſe projected in the caſtle. An elegant ſuite of rooms, which have been ever ſtiled the counteſs's apartments, but which have been long diſuſed, are ordered to be repaired, and my furniture (far ſuperior in elegance to any in the caſtle) is to be removed to them. My preſent apartments at Dr. Gordon's ſuggeſtion, are to be appropriated to a nurſery.

Our numerous gueſts will leave us in a few days, and we ſhall then immediately commence our journey to England. The Doctor will accompany us as far as Durham, and at that place I muſt likewiſe part from my Agatha; ſhe has however promiſed me her company during my confinement; this requeſt was made by the Earl, whoſe unre-

mitting ſtudy (with grateful pleaſure I acknowledge) is to promote my happineſs. The Dr. frequently remarks on the change in his conduct and behaviour; and lately obſerved,

"To you he owes his reformation. His ſolicitude to render himſelf agreeable to you, has brought to light thoſe perfections of the head and heart which from fancied ſuperiority and inattention to the opinion of the world, have been hitherto obſcured."

Agatha aſſents to this obſervation, and the Earl frankly condemns his former conduct. He one day ſaid,

"Frequently from a want of conſideration I have acted with unkindneſs and ſeverity, but ſince I have known the pain which even in idea is occaſioned by the ſeparation from a beloved object, I am enabled to judge of the diſtreſs which I have inflicted on others. Johnſon particularly, is tenderly attached to his wife, yet by his attendance on me, I have compelled them to experience all

all the inconvenience of a ſeparation during many months; but in future, wherever I reſide, ſhe ſhall have an apartment aſſigned for her."

She had however expreſſed her wiſhes that ſhe might relinquiſh her preſent ſituation, and be conſidered as my attendant. The Earl was pleaſed at her making this requeſt, as it proved her attachment to me, and deſired that I would give the neceſſary orders that ſhe may reſign the place ſhe has hitherto filled. I am prevented from adding more than to aſſure you that I am affectionately your friend,

CAROLINE NARSBY.

In CONTINUATION.

Narſby Caſtle, Decemb. 2.

TO-MORROW we ſhall quit this place, which I entered with ſo much regret, and have been accuſtomed to conſider as my reſidence for life. The promiſcuous party who have been viſitors here, are now diſperſed, and we are left with our much valued friends Dr. Gordon, and Agatha. They by every word and action teſtify the pleaſure which they feel at ſeeing me reſtored to the world. The Doctor, who thinks highly of my unreluctant acquieſcence with the Earl's wiſhes, has frequently given his opinion on the ſubject, though never was I ſo gratified and flattered as by the approbation

tion yeſterday beſtowed on me. The converſation (which I now believe was purpoſely introduced by the Doctor) turned on the characters of thoſe illuſtrious females celebrated in the annals of hiſtory. We had given our various opinions, and the Earl had particularized many of the Roman Matrons whoſe merit had gained them diſtinguiſhed approbation. The Doctor then ſaid,

"I agree with you, my Lord, but let me aſk, in all your reſearches in hiſtory, have you ever found a female, poſſeſſed of youth, health, and beauty, deſervedly reſpected, and juſtly entitled to admiration, who could relinquiſh the titles and rank to which ſhe had an undoubted claim, with all thoſe comforts liberty and affluence could procure, and, at the requeſt of her Lord, ſubmit to an abſolute ſecluſion from the world, yet by cheerful compliance and unceaſing efforts to pleaſe, could make even that ſecluſion appear rather the effect of choice than neceſſity?"

Agatha

Agatha, who immediately comprehended him, ſmilingly aſſented to this remark, and the Earl emphatically ſaid,

"You are right, Doctor,—hiſtory does not furniſh a ſimilar example, (and looking on me with pleaſure, he added) there never was but one ſuch Phœnix in the world."

I, addreſſing Dr. Gordon, replied,

You muſt not, my kind friend, ſuffer your partiality to miſlead your judgement,—a wife ſo complying might doubtleſs be found; but in even your extenſive knowledge of mankind, can you produce an inſtance, in which the tenderneſs and unremitting attention of a huſband, could for many months render that ſolitude ſo delightful, as to occaſion it to be quitted with regret.

Agatha then ſaid, "I accede to the truth of thy obſervation, though that does not leſſen the merit of thy compliance. Thy conduct through ſevere and arduous trials, has

has been exemplary. Preſerve but in thy elevated ſtate, the ſame equanimity, and I ſhall pronounce thee a Phœnix, indeed."

The Earl added, "Do not doubt it. Our Caroline poſſeſſes that dignity of mind, that true greatneſs of ſoul, which as adverſity could not debaſe, the moſt exalted ſituation can never injure."

Here the converſation ended; and from every circumſtance which I have related will you not pronounce, my Louiſa, that I am amply rewarded for all my cares—for every anxious, uneaſy moment? I readily confeſs that apprehenſion for your ſafety, is the only event which throws a cloud over the perfect happineſs of your friend,

CAROLINE NARSBY.

In CONTINUATION.

London, Decemb. 20.

ONCE more, my dear Louiſa, I am returned to the Metropolis, after having taken, as I conſidered, an everlaſting leave of it. The attention of the Earl prevented the journey from being either fatiguing or inconvenient; it rather reſembled a pleaſurable excurſion, as we never travelled but during the morning, and ſcarcely exceeded thirty miles a day; he ſtopped likewiſe at thoſe places, which he conſidered deſerving my notice. Various occurrences which hiſtory has recorded have recurred to my memory, on viewing thoſe ſcenes once marked by momentous events; but particularly has my mind been impreſſed by the fate of the unfortunate

fortunate Queen Mary. At Linlithgo are ſtill to be ſeen the walls (which are all that now remain) of the apartment, where ſhe firſt beheld the light; and near Renfrew, are the ruins of Cruickſtone Caſtle, where during the early period of her union with Lord Darnly ſhe paſſed, perhaps, the only happy hours ſhe ever knew. Her favourite yew tree, which was often impreſſed on her copper coin, ſtill flouriſhes in defiance of the ravages of time; and in the interior of thoſe ruins may be diſtinguiſhed the lofty hall, where ſhe, adorned with all the ſoftneſs and beauty of her ſex, and with all the faſcinating graces of the court in which ſhe was educated, received the homage of her comparatively uncivilized ſubjects. With emotions of pity and concern, I have traced her flight from her native country to the (as ſhe too ſoon found) inhoſpitable kingdom in which ſhe ſought an aſylum. Who can reflect on the varying, chequered ſcenes of her life without wiſhing to draw a veil over her faults and lamenting her untimely fate? But

it

it is unneceſſary to expatiate farther on thoſe circumſtances, you are well acquainted with her hiſtory, and have with me frequently deplored her misfortunes; nor have I time to give you the particulars of a journey rendered doubly pleaſing by contraſting the gloomy depreſſing ſenſations which I experienced when I laſt travelled this road, with my preſent felicity. Frequently does the Earl's obſervation recur to my memory; and I readily allow that by ſubmitting to my view only the dark ſide of the perſpective, he has created for me a ſuperior degree of happineſs to what my ideas could ever form a conception. But this is a ſubject on which I cannot truſt myſelf, and will therefore haſten to conclude, aſſuring my Louiſa of the unalterable regard and affection of your friend,

CAROLINE NARSBY.

IN CONTINUATION.

Lonaon, Dec. 24.

ON my arrival at this place, it was my firſt care to write to thoſe generous friends (whoſe affection has ſtood even the teſt of adverſity) to inform them of my return to the great world, and of my preſent ſituation. The Earl likewiſe deſired that I would make his acknowledgments for every intended favour. It was my wiſh likewiſe to write to Annette, but, at preſent, know not where I can addreſs her, as, unavoidably, I have been ignorant of her ſituation, ſince I reſigned her to the protection of Mr. Stanhope's family. To Mrs. Belville, it was the Earl's wiſh to introduce

troduce me as the Counteſs of Narſby, anticipating the ſurpriſe and pleaſure a viſit ſo unexpected muſt occaſion.

As my ſituation was to be concealed till he made the diſcovery, I went alone to the houſe of my friends. The *ſombre* appearance occaſioned by a court mourning prevented any diſtinction in dreſs, and the ſervants were forbidden to announce me; I was, therefore, received as Mrs. Hamilton.

I found Mr. Goodall with this happy family, and all expreſſed the utmoſt pleaſure at ſeeing me. A thouſand inquiries were made relative to my paſt ſecluſion and future proſpects, and concluding that I was ſtill unfortunante, and compelled to lead the life of a dependant for ſupport, they, with generous compaſſion, exerted every argument to prevail on me to relinquiſh ſo irkſome a ſituation.

" Let

"Let my houſe (ſaid Mr. Belville) be your aſylum, and accept from me, as from a brother, protection and aſſiſtance."

Mr. Goodall likewiſe exerted his influence to induce my compliance, kindly ſaying,

"Oblige me, my dear Madam, in making me inſtrumental to your happineſs; the trifle I have already offered, I will by an irrevocable deed ſecure to you for life."

Thoſe proofs of generous, diſintereſted friendſhip ſenſibly affected me, and I was concerned to practice even a momentary concealment, with thoſe who had uniformly ſhewn ſuch kindneſs and attention. The entrance of a large party, however, relieved me from this embarraſſment, as it precluded all particular converſation.

In this party I perceived ſeveral of my former acquaintance, but as they conſidered

ed me a dependant, and in obſcurity, a contemptuous glance, denoting their ſuperiority, was all the notice I received. They were ſoon ſeated at the card tables, and the avidity with which they purſued that amuſement, ſoon obliterated their faint recollection of me. I was, therefore, at liberty to enjoy a converſation with Mrs. Belville, and her daughter, which afforded ample compenſation for their neglect. A lady, however, whoſe family connections with Mr. Hamilton, had occaſioned the moſt friendly intercourſe to ſubſiſt between us, now being cut out from the rubber, was at leiſure minutely to ſurvey me, and probably ſuppoſing, that more attention was paid to me than was due to the unfortunate, affected to recollect me. With a ſupercilious bend of the head, therefore, and exulting expreſſion of countenance, ſhe thus addreſſed me:

"I proteſt I had quite forgotten you—Pray where have you lived all this time? You are, I think, a companion to ſome lady

lady of faſhion—prodigiouſly fortunate to obtain ſo comfortable a ſituation! Your ſalary by your appearance muſt be genteel. I would have taken you into my family, but really my nerves are too much ſhattered to endure the ſight of people in misfortunes—it quite unhinges me. Unhappily, I have too much ſenſibility for my peace. It was a dreadful circumſtance that you ſhould have ſquandered ſo fine a fortune, though it is not ſurpriſing that your extravagance ſhould involve you in ſuch diſtreſs. Indeed I always feared the conſequence of ſo imprudent a marriage—poor Mr. Hamilton!—a mere juvenile attachment. For his ſake, however, I ſhall not refuſe you my countenance, while you conduct yourſelf with decency and prudence."

This addreſs was, as you may ſuppoſe, unnoticed by me; it however awakened the recollection of the party, ſome of whom condeſcended ſlightly to notice me; but

as the lady already mentioned had proved, that ſhe was acquainted with the particulars of my misfortunes, curioſity induced thoſe around her to make ſome inquiries; and in *rather* a lower tone of voice ſhe thus proceeded:

"Mr. Hamilton married this young perſon as ſoon as he was of age. His attachment was the effect of mere perſonal attractions—though, for my part, I never could perceive any beauty. [This occaſioned a general ſtare, but the accompanying ſhrug gave a tacit aſſent to the remark.] However, when he ſaw more of the world, and was introduced to women of family and fortune, he (as might be expected) ſoon repented his engagements, and he formed a connection with the Counteſs de Belmont—a charming creature—quite the woman of faſhion, and of a noble family, though ſhe has lately had the misfortune to be executed for a forgery.

"Mr.

"Mr. Hamilton was much attached to her, and ſupported her with all the elegance becoming her rank, nor was any œconomy practiſed in their own family; but that is not ſurpriſing when you conſider her (looking on me) ignorance, and former obſcurity.

"He diſapproved her conduct, which occaſioned mutual recrimination — reproaches enſued — domeſtic diſcord eſtranged him from his family, and ſtill more attached him to the Counteſs, till, in a matrimonial quarrel he burſt a blood veſſel, which terminated his life."

How ſtrangely, my Louiſa, has the tongue of calumny perverted this detail: the noble birth and pleaſing manners of the Counteſs, are pleaded in extenuation of all her crimes; while my misfortunes have been aggravated, by every unjuſt and cruel aſperſion on my conduct.

Mrs. Belville, who had been much diſtreſſed for me, took advantage of a ſhort pauſe in the converſation, to introduce another ſubject, but her efforts were unavailing. I was too inſignificant to require the ſacrifice of their amuſement, to my feelings.

She, therefore, thus continued:

"At his death the family eſtate devolved to a diſtant relation; all his perſonal fortune had been expended by their extravagance. The town houſe, furniture, and carriages were ſeized for the benefit of the creditors, and his widow (who, of courſe, had not a ſettlement) was left abſolutely deſtitute. I was ſhocked when I firſt heard the account, for I had a prodigious regard for her, who, conſidering every thing, behaved very decently; but I was not able to afford her any aſſiſtance; for ſo much is required to ſupport a proper figure in life, that I always find my fortune

ſame inadequate to my expences. She had a child too, which would have been a vaſt encumbrance in my family: for thoſe material reaſons, I thought it beſt not to make any inquiry relative to her. I was much diſtreſſed at being obliged to attend the auction in Groſvenor Square---a houſe, in which, from my connection with the family, I was ever conſidered as a reſident; but there were ſeveral elegant things which I had reſolved to purchaſe---the luſtres, particularly, which were uncommonly beautiful. Unfortunately Lady Bromly attended with the ſame determination; neither would relinquiſh them; ſo we bid againſt each other, till we had enhanced their price infinitely beyond their original value; the expence, however, was not an object with either, and I know not when the conteſt would have ended, if we had not been interrupted by the information, that Mrs. Hamilton was below. Every perſon was ſurpriſed; for, concluding ſhe was in diſ-

treſs, no one knew any thing about her; however, our curioſity was excited, and we all ran to ſee her.

" My intimacy and regard were well known, I was therefore univerſally called upon by all my acquaintance for the particulars of her hiſtory, and was ſo much diſtreſſed and intereſted in the relation, that I had abſolutely forgotten the luſtres; taking, therefore, advantage of my abſence, they were knocked down to Lady Bromly. —I never felt ſo ſevere a diſappointment; I really could have cried for vexation."

An interruption was now put to the converſation, by the entrance of a ſervant, who announced " the Earl of Narſby."

Mr. Belville gave orders for his admittance, expreſſing, however, his aſtoniſhment at the intended viſit. His remark occaſioned the ſurpriſe to be general, and as

as he was a ſtranger to all, every opinion was freely given.

A gentleman, whom I had obſerved poſſeſſed a talent for irony and ſarcaſtic wit, ſaid,

"I have a ſlight acquaintance with his Lordſhip; he is ſenſible and perfectly polite, but is undoubtedly the proudeſt nobleman in the kingdom. He lately married, and a few days ſince brought his Counteſs to town; I am informed that ſhe is a beautiful woman, but as her rank was beneath that of a ſovereign princeſs, the world is aſtoniſhed at the alliance. We, however, conſider it one of thoſe faſhionable attachments, where repentance and a divorce cloſely follow the marriage ceremony."

The loud laugh expreſſed approbation of this ſpeech, which was only checked by the appearance of the Earl.—

He bowed on entering the room, then immediately addreſſing me ſaid,

" I muſt requeſt your Ladyſhip to preſent me to your friends."

I introduced him to Mr. Belville's family, and Mr. Goodall, when with the politeſt freedom and eaſe, he thanked them for every kind attention, each act of friendſhip, they had conferred on " his Counteſs."

You can better imagine, than I deſcribe, the effect this declaration occaſioned. The countenance of my friends correſponded with the pleaſure they expreſſed. My former acquaintance betrayed mortification, chagrin, and diſappointment; but, as meanneſs is ever an attendant on inſolent pride, every abject artifice was now practiſed to attract our notice.

" I was their charming friend, and deſervedly entitled to fill ſome exalted ſtation.

tion. It was what ſuch ſuperior merit and accompliſhments might undoubtedly claim, and I ſhould reflect an honour on the high rank in which I was placed."

Thoſe compliments, however, failed in the intent, for the Earl ſuppoſing that I had ſufficient reaſons for diſregarding them, behaved with the moſt mortifying indifference; all were, therefore, ſilenced but the Lady, who had been ſo communicative, now finding herſelf neglected—with the moſt obſequious air ſhe advanced towards me, and in a ſpeech replete with titles and adulation, requeſted that I would introduce her to the Earl.

He liſtened to the fawning addreſs with marked contempt, and I immediately ſaid,

"Excuſe me, Madam; for to my friends alone I ſhall introduce his Lordſhip; examine your own heart—it will inſtruct you whether you have any claim to

the appellation. I will not, however, wound your ſenſibility, by continuing an acquaintance with a perſon whoſe paſt miſfortunes you have, this evening, with ſo much feeling recapitulated."

She ſhrunk from me mortified and humbled, for though conſcious of deſerving the reproof, ſhe appeared hurt at the detection. By this diſcouragement, I likewiſe ſilenced thoſe accommodating characters, whoſe flexibility proved their readineſs to pay their court to the rank in which I was placed, though ſo recently they had conſidered me deſerving of their cenſure.

The Earl took an opportunity of mentioning our former marriage, and named the exact time and place, when, and where it had been celebrated, then obligingly added,

"But deſirous of proving to the world the honour this lady has conferred on me, I have

I have lately had the ceremony performed in the moſt public manner."

This declaration occaſioned ſtill farther ſurpriſe, as it proved repentance had not followed, with ſuch celerity as had been predicted. The gentleman, however, by whom the remark had been made, appeared ſo conſcious, that I would not even by a look increaſe his embarraſſment, indeed (with pleaſure I perceived) the Earl's behaviour was ſo wholly the reverſe of the portrait he had drawn, that it was impoſſible to trace the ſlighteſt reſemblance. He requeſted my friends would fix an early day for their viſit to us, and with engaging familiarity, deſired they would admit him to a place in their friendſhip.

And now, my Louiſa, my care—my only ſolicitude is for you; I know you ever firm in your determination, ſteady in the reſolution once formed, nor diſcouraged from any active duty by the idea of perſonal

danger—I, however, cannot hear the tempeſtuous winds, or reflect on a ſtormy ſea, without trembling for your ſafety.

May my ardent prayers be accompliſhed, and I ſhall again embrace the friend I love.

CAROLINE NARSBY.

IN CONTINUATION.

London, December 27.

I HAVE been long anxious to gain ſome information of Annette; but as that could only be done by a perſonal inquiry, it has been unavoidably delayed till my return to town. I now, therefore, availed myſelf of the firſt opportunity to call at the houſe of Mr. Stanhope, where I had left her. In anſwer to my inquiries, I found that was her home, and was immediately introduced to the family. Annette was amuſing them with her performance on the harp, but the moment ſhe ſaw me, ſhe ſprung from the inſtrument, overſet whatever

whatever impeded her courſe, and flew to embrace me with her accuſtomed vivacity, but with a far greater appearance of pleaſure than I have ever ſeen her expreſs. Even Captain Stanhope (who was preſent) was ſtartled at the rapidity of her movements; but ſhe did not ſuffer him long to remain ignorant of the cauſe, for with every expreſſion of gratitude, ſhe introduced me as the perſon to whom ſhe owed her ſafety and preſervation.

Mr. Stanhope, to whom, though perſonally a ſtranger, I found I was well known, joined his family in thanking me for the protection I had afforded her, repeatedly declaring, that he was indebted to me for the happineſs he enjoyed, and with pleaſure, I perceived the affectionate tenderneſs with which ſhe was treated by his parents, who aſſerted, that ſhe equally ſhared their affections with their ſon.

I found

I found Captain Stanhope had engagements for the day, and, therefore, requeſted Annette would accompany me, which ſhe readily complied with. When we were alone ſhe again gratefully thanked me for the protection I had afforded her—pathetically retracing the diſtreſſing ſcenes from which I had reſcued her, and rapturouſly deſcribing the happineſs ſhe now poſſeſſed. Her heart was ſo deeply impreſſed by the ſubject, that it was not poſſible to check her; but when ſhe had given utterance to thoſe feelings, I requeſted to know the events which had befallen her, during our ſeparation:—ſhe immediately ſaid,

"When I parted from you, my only friend, I felt a painful void—a depreſſion of ſpirits, which all my efforts were unable to conquer; the account too of Mr. Stanhope's precarious health added to my anxiety; but let me with gratitude own that the attention, and even parental tenderneſs

tenderneſs with which I was treated (and to which novelty gave additional charms, for I had never known a parent's affection) ſoon diſperſed the gloom, and I was deſirous of appearing happy that I might not be ungrateful.

" On the earlieſt intimation of my arrival Mr. Stanhope returned to England, when every care was forgotten in the tranſport of our meeting, after the almoſt incredible dangers and difficulties we had experienced. His firſt conſideration was to fulfil the engagement he had made St. Amande; our marriage was, therefore, immediately celebrated, conformable with the cuſtom of this country, and ſanctioned by his parent's preſence.

" I have (ſhe added) made every effort to obtain my father's forgiveneſs, but hitherto without ſucceſs; and from his eſtabliſhed character I dare not form any expectations;

pectations; the duties which he profeſſes to owe his country, have ever rendered him inſenſible to the ties of nature.

I enquired for St. Amande and his ſiſter; ſhe informed me that by the death of their father, they had no longer an obligation to remain in a country in which they were expoſed to continual alarm and danger; they were, therefore, deſirous of fixing their reſidence in this kingdom, where, from the well-known liberality and generous attention of the Engliſh, they doubted not of a ſecure aſylum. I found ſhe was in continual expectation of their arrival, though from the dangers ſhe had experienced, ſhe expreſſed the utmoſt apprehenſion for their ſafety.

I would deſcribe Annette, but I ſcarcely think it poſſible to do her juſtice; her features, without ſtrict regularity, are pleaſing, and her countenance diſcovers the moſt

moſt intereſting expreſſion; her figure is little, though delicately proportioned. She poſſeſſes the gaiety and ſprightlineſs characteriſtic of her countrywomen, but with perfect innocence and refined delicacy; while, therefore, her vivacity delights, the ſtrict propriety of her conduct effectually checks improper familiarity. The knowledge and abilities of St. Amande inſtructed her in all that books could teach, but from her ſecluſion, ſhe is ſo wholly unacquainted with the world, that even common occurrences ſerve to alarm; gueſs, then, how unequal to contend with all the dangers ſhe has experienced. The Earl, to whom I had related her adventures, beheld her with aſtoniſhment; he, affectionately congratulated her on having ſo happily ſurmounted every difficulty, and requeſted ſhe would introduce Captain Stanhope, as he was deſirous to cultivate his acquaintance.

I anxiouſly

I anxiously anticipate the pleasure of introducing her to you, and doubt not but your sentiments will coincide with your friend

CAROLINE NARSBY.

IN

IN CONTINUATION.

London, December 28.

IN a few days I ſhall, for a ſhort ſpace of time, remove from this place, as the Earl is deſirous of ſpending the enſuing receſs of Parliament at Howard Park, near my native village. He has engaged the ſmall circle, whom with pleaſure I acknowledge as my friends, to be of the party. Mr. Belville's family, with Mr. Goodall, will accompany us—Captain Stanhope and Annette have given a conditional promiſe, but they daily expect the arrival of their friends from France. Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery

gomery are likewiſe invited to join our ſociety. I wrote, Maria, immediately on my return to the world, and received letters from both, containing affectionate congratulations, and expreſſing at the ſame time their regret, that, in conſequence of the diſtance, they ſhould for ſome time be deprived of accepting the invitation I had given. The Earl, therefore, requeſted they would meet us at Howard Park, as that is but an inconſiderable journey from their reſidence.

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Annette with more than uſual vivacity, and eyes ſparkling with delight and pleaſure, has flown to me with the utmoſt expedition, to inform me of the arrival of St. Amande and Blanche; they were detained by a ſlight indiſpoſition at the port where they had landed; Captain Stanhope had, therefore, haſtened

haſtened to meet and conduct them to his friends.

Their arrival unavoidably deprives me of Annette's company, during our intended excurſion; but I could not regret what has occaſioned to her ſuch exquiſite delight and ſatisfaction.

On Thurſday, the ceremony of the preſentation is to take place, and on the Earl's account I am gratified at having already been admitted to that honour.

By a frequent attendance at the drawing room (which was Mr. Hamilton's choice) I have been known in the great world, who, perhaps, may ſuſpend their cenſure, when they reflect, that I have been noticed by the firſt and moſt illuſtrious characters.

I ſhall continue my journal when I arrive

at Howard Park; with various emotions I ſhall viſit my native village---it will recall the ſingular events which have happened to your friend,

CAROLINE NARSBY.

IN

IN CONTINUATION.

Howard Park, January 2.

YESTERDAY, after a pleaſant journey (though in a ſeaſon ſo unfavourable) we arrived at D——. Dr. Gordon had announced our intended viſit; we were, therefore, met, a few miles from the place, by a numerous proceſſion---but it was not by titled characters, nor a ſplendid cavalcade of coaches that I was welcomed to my "dear native vale." It was by my beloved father's humble pariſhioners---by thoſe who gratefully acknowledged they owed their happineſs and comfort to his conſiderate care.

Now,

Now, dreſſed in all their ruſtic holiday finery, whilſt every honeſt countenance glowed with pleaſure, reſpectfully they ſurrounded the carriage, requeſting, with eager affection, to behold the daughter of their dear, their honoured maſter, on whom they beſtowed repeated bleſſings.

The Earl was affected, while by tears alone I could expreſs my feelings. He ſpoke kindly to them, thanked them for this proof of their regard, and bade them repair to Howard Park, where their affection for me would ever ſecure their welcome. As we approached the village, every ruſtic demonſtration of joy was perceivable---their gardens were robbed of even the ſcanty portion of flowers, which the ſeaſon now produces, to weave in garlands or form arches, under which we were to paſs; nor was their rural harmony omitted; and as the hand of gratitude had touched the chord, the ſounds vi-

brated on my heart, with every exquiſite ſenſation of delight. The Earl felt and ſhared in the pleaſure I experienced.

He afterwards ſaid,

"This, my Caroline, is indeed a triumph beyond what all the Roman ſplendour could produce; for this expreſſes the genuine dictates of the heart—the ſincere tribute of gratitude and affection. Never did my boaſted pride of birth, my rank or fortune, obtain theſe enviable honours, which your father's modeſt virtues, and your merit have procured you."

Dr. Gordon and his ſiſter, met us at the Park, and affectionately welcomed my return to D——. The Earl deſired that it might be publicly known, that thoſe families from whom Mrs. Hamilton had experienced attention, would be received by him with pleaſure.

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In the evening, he propoſed viſiting our humble friends, who, for the firſt time, were admitted in this ſplendid manſion; they had been conſigned to Johnſon's care, who cheerfully executed the orders he had received, in contributing to their amuſement and feſtivity.

Their accuſtomed apprehenſions of the Earl, made them at firſt timid and ſhy, in his preſence; but encouraged by his affability, their reſtraint wore off and rapturouſly they entered on their favourite theme—the praiſes of their dear, their honoured maſter; relating in their artleſs "unvarniſhed" language his numerous acts of generoſity and benevolence, from which all their happineſs and comfort had been derived.

The Earl liſtened to them with pleaſure, told them to conſider him as their friend, and ſaid,

"I beg it may be known and remembered, that all who were the worthy Mr. Stanley's penſioners are, henceforth, under my care."

The Doctor, at theſe words, looked around him, and perceiving feſtivity and ſocial friendſhip reign, where gloomy ſtate had hitherto preſided, ſaid, in a low voice,

"My Lord, I ſcarcely know Howard Park."

He immediately anſwered,

"Too long, my friend, I have lived regardleſs of the endearing ties of ſocial life, but, bleſt with ſuch an example, (looking affectionately on me), would you not think me incorrigible if I did not attempt a reformation? The happineſs which I experience is a high reward."

"I am now interrupted, but will ſoon reſume

reſume my pen. An account of thoſe places where we have paſt ſo many happy years, cannot but be intereſting to you, as the ſight has been peculiarly gratifying to your friend,

CAROLINE NARSBY.

In CONTINUATION.

Howard Park, Jan. 5.

I HAVE this day viſited the cottage, and you who know my partiality for the peaceful reſidence of my early days, can gueſs with what ſenſations; not a ſhrub or tree but was marked by ſome intereſting circumſtance: under their ſhade I have ſat with my beloved father, have heard his pious precepts, and from his inſtructions have learnt that reſignation and fortitude which have ſupported me through all the trying ſcenes of my life. Williams has preſerved, in both the houſe and garden, its original order, and

exact

exact form, assuring me he had ever hoped it would be my home; adding,

"To be sure I can't but be glad to see your *Countess-ship* such a great Lady; but however, I and my wife has always hoped to spend our days, in waiting upon our dear mistress.

The Earl was pleased with this genuine sincerity and affection, and would have made him a present, but this the honest worthy man declined, desiring only that he might have permission to come to the great house, that he might sometimes see his dear mistress, and he appeared delighted when assured that he and his wife would be ever welcome; their daughter, my faithful Jenny, is I find married very advantageously. We were preparing to leave the cottage, when Williams informed us of an event which he said his joy at seeing me had made him almost forget; it was, that two months since (in his words) "A grand gentleman, who had much such a crown upon his coach, as

I now ſee upon my Lord's, had drove to the cottage, and made many inquiries for my parents, expreſſing the deepeſt concern at the account of my mother's death, and the moſt anxious ſolicitude for her child, who Williams informed him had by unmerited misfortunes been compelled to quit this country, and of whoſe deſtination at preſent he could give no account, as the rector, he ſaid, was abſent, who always knew more than any one about his young miſtreſs. The ſtranger diſcovered great anxiety,—requeſted him to make every inquiry, and aſſured him that on his return from Ireland, which would be in leſs than three months, he would again ſee him."

This account gives room for various conjectures; my father's humble origin is well known, and he was the laſt ſurvivor of his family. My mother's birth was ever hid in obſcurity, and to the lateſt period of her life, ſhe knew not to whom ſhe was related.

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The Earl left his card for the ſtranger, deſiring Williams to ſuppreſs every other account, than that he was enabled to give ſome information of me. And now we impatiently wait for the eclairciſſement.

January 7th.

We have a moſt pleaſing addition to our party, by the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery. My dear Maria, regardleſs of forms, or of the friends by whom I was ſurrounded, eagerly flew to me, and claſping her arms around me, rapturouſly expreſſed the pleaſure which ſhe felt from this interview; ſoon recollecting herſelf however, ſhe gracefully turned to the Earl, and ſaid,

" Excuſe me, my Lord, and attribute any indecorum to the effuſions of a grateful hear; tfor if you knew the obligations which I owe my charming friend, that to her I am indebted for all the happineſs which I enjoy,"—

He immediately ſaid;

"Apologies, my deareſt madam, are unneceſſary; from experience I can judge of thoſe ſenſations; for, like you, with gratitude I confeſs, that I owe every hour of happineſs to our dear Caroline."

Mr. Montgomery likewiſe expreſſed his obligations, and teſtified the ſincereſt pleaſure at again ſeeing me, nor could I without heart-felt ſatisfaction, contemplate this happy pair. Maria is perfectly reſtored to health and ſpirits, while her engaging manners, and amiable diſpoſition, render her univerſally reſpected and admired.

During our frequent excurſions around this village, I have often paſſed near Elm Grove, but ſo materially is its appearance changed, that the name is now a ſatire on the place, for not a tree remains to juſtify the appellation. Thoſe trees which ever ſpread with beautiful luxuriance, and which for ages have been the undiſturbed reſidence of the feathered choir, are cut down to give

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an uninterrupted view of the turnpike-road, while the delightful harmonious ſongſters who have been the peaceful tenants of thoſe groves, now, in harſh and diſcordant notes, lament the loſs of their former habitations. This change muſt likewiſe be materially felt by the inconſiderate poſſeſſor; for as the houſe is ſituated on an eminence, it is now expoſed to the bleak Northern winds, and ſcorching ſummer's ſun. The extenſive lawn is not however (in his opinion) unornamented; temples and obeliſks of every form are placed in various directions, while ſtatues more numerous than the Heathen Pantheon could boaſt, croud every intermediate ſpace. Mr. Brake has likewiſe been indefatigable in his efforts to deſtroy the uniform beauty and regularity of the houſe; he has thrown out bow windows, built colonades; and porticoes ſo that it might now boaſt a part of every order of architecture, while elegance, taſte, and ſymmetry are utterly deſtroyed.

He (with the meanneſs inſeparable from a narrow, contracted mind) has written to ſolicit a renewal of our friendſhip; his letter replete with the moſt obſequious adulation, now liberally beſtows on me the diſtinguiſhed epithet of his "deareſt couſin."—Mean, unfeeling man! Could he ſuppoſe that I have loſt all recollection of his former unkindneſs, or want diſcernment to attribute his preſent ſervile attention to my elevated ſtation? The Earl, whom I conſulted on this occaſion, expreſſed the warmth natural to him at this proof of his duplicity, and with reſentment recurred to that moment of diſtreſs when, forſaken and deſtitute, he could cruelly inſult and upbraid me; he ordered his ſervant therefore to return his letter in a blank cover. I have received the politeſt attention from all my former acquaintance, who, for the firſt time viſited Howard Park. The Earl was unconſcious that his neighbourhood contained ſuch enlightened, and pleaſing ſociety, and he has now declared his wiſhes and intention to cultivate their acquaintance,

quaintance; a declaration which, as it proves his former weakneſs conquered, is peculiarly gratifying to your ever affectionate friend,

CAROLINE NARSBY.

In CONTINUATION.

Howard Park, January 20.

I HAVE an event now to communicate to my Louiſa, ſurpriſing as it is unexpected. yeſterday, when we were aſſembled, prior to the hour of dinner, a ſervant announced Lord Melſom, and was immediately followed by a venerable though graceful figure, on whoſe expreſſive countenance the traces of ſorrow had left an indelible impreſſion. Haſtily he addreſſed the Earl, and in a voice ſcarcely articulate from various emotions, ſaid,

" I am directed to your Lordſhip for information of the daughter of Mrs. Stanley,

who

who though thrown on the world, and apparently neglected by her natural protectors, was I acknowledge my child; she is for ever lost to me, but if you can direct me where to find Mrs. Hamilton, her daughter, do not with-hold the anxiously wished-for communication, which offers to my declining years compensation for a life of sorrow.

Astonishment for a few minutes rendered the Earl incapable of attending to this request, but he was soon sufficiently collected to present me to him, expressing his happiness that he was enabled to introduce as his wife, the relation whom he had so anxiously sought.

Lord Melsom received me with affection and parental tenderness, he earnestly requested that I would consider him as a father, declaring that he should acknowledge me as the heiress to his fortune, expressing at the same time his satisfaction that he was enabled to reward the generous affection which the

Earl

Earl had ſhown, by beſtowing on me a fortune equal to his rank.

I will not pretend to be unmoved at this event; frequently for the Earl's ſake, I have wiſhed that my origin had been leſs obſcure, it is therefore peculiarly gratifying that I have now a relation, whom without a bluſh he might acknowledge, and with delight I reflect that by my attentions I might conſole the declining years of this venerable parent, and aſſiſt to cheer the evening of a wretched life. His hiſtory ſhall be the ſubject of the next letter from my Louiſa's ever affectionate friend,

CAROLINE NARSBY.

IN CONTINUATION.

Howard Park, January 24.

LORD Melſom thus commenced his narrative.

I am the ſecond ſon of the nobleman whoſe title I now inherit; from an early period of my life I was intended for the army, and at the age of ſeventeen embarked without direction or experience on the world; in a continual ſeries of pleaſure and amuſement I paſſed the firſt year of my liberty, when at an aſſembly I beheld Matilda Harcourt, who had juſt emerged from a boarding ſchool. That moment decided my fate, and I reſigned a willing captive to her charms. This might be termed the roman-

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tic paſſion of love, before either reaſon or reflection had matured the judgement. I conceived that my very exiſtence depended on her favour, and had encouraged the idea, that a ſeparation from her would be the excluſion of every comfort.

My father ſoon gained intelligence of what was conſidered an imprudent attachment, but confiding in my duty and affection, he merely repreſented the impropriety of my conduct, delicately and with tenderneſs, pointing out the line which I ought to purſue, without exerting his authority to control my actions. How has this generous confidence recoiled on myſelf, with aggravated miſery!—How keenly has it pointed the ſting of ingratitude!—For inattentive to his admonitions, I prevailed on Matilda to accompany me to that land of freedom, were illicit marriages obtain an immediate ſanction. On my return I wrote to implore my father's forgiveneſs, earneſtly entreating for admiſſion to him, but the

moſt

moſt decided refuſal was given to this requeſt, and I was informed that I was diſcarded by a juſtly offended parent. To avoid reflection, I fled to ſcenes of diſſipated gaity, and with thoughtleſs avidity purſued the paths of pleaſure, nor pauſed to conſider on the inevitable misfortune by which we were ſurrounded. Stern neceſſity at laſt terminated this career; my income was inadequate to my expenſive mode of life, and by ſlow gradations, we were reduced from the lap of luxury to poverty and diſtreſs. Here indeed was room for reflection; I found every aſpiring paſſion cruſhed, all my proſpects of advancement deſtroyed, while the beloved partner of my heart was ſinking under the preſſure of ſickneſs and dejection; reduced to this ſituation I once more ventured to become a ſuppliant to my father; but as an aggravation to my miſery, I found he had been ſuddenly deprived of life, and merciful Heaven!—he died without extending his forgiveneſs to me—this was a ſtroke beyond what I had reſolution

to

to ſupport; my health fell a ſacrifice to mental anxieties, and a lingering fever had nearly terminated a life of miſery. My dear Matilda was indefatigable in her tender attentions, though in a ſituation which required reſt and repoſe; ſcarcely was I raiſed from the bed of ſickneſs, ere ſhe became the mother of two children. Her health, naturally delicate, together with my unſettled ſituation, deprived her of the comfort of performing all the duties of a parent; ſhe therefore, (though with extreme reluctance) conſigned the helpleſs infants to the care of thoſe humble peaſants, whoſe cottage was on a Moor, near the town where we reſided. The deſtination of the regiment to which I belonged, ſoon requiring our removal to a diſtant place, we were compelled to quit our darling offspring. During a ſeries of years we were ſtationed in various parts of this and the adjacent kingdom, too diſtant from the ſpot where I had left my children to enjoy the happineſs of an interview with them. At the expiration of four years however,

ever, an order came for our removal to North America, and as Matilda inſiſted on accompanying me, I was reſolved my ſon ſhould ſhare our exile; we therefore repaired to the cottage, and experienced the delight of again beholding our beloved children; but even this gratification was imbittered by the anguiſh thoſe little innocents expreſſed at their projected ſeparation. I reſigned my daughter to the care of thoſe who had already ſo well diſcharged the truſt; but previous to our embarcation, I requeſted my ſiſter, who occaſionally correſponded with me, to pay ſome attention to her niece.

Our voyage was proſperous, and we arrived in health and ſafety to our deſtined port. It was now my Matilda experienced all the hardſhips of a ſoldier's life; but ſhe who was the moſt gentle of human beings, and whoſe delicate frame appeared unequal to contend with any hardſhip, with unexampled heroiſm and fortitude, cheerfully ſupported every danger. She was the ſoother

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of my care, the ſource of all my comfort. Short and tranſient however were all my enjoyments; on our removal to a warmer climate, I was ſeized with an epidemic diſorder, which ſoon diſcovered a putrid tendency; whilſt I preſerved my recollection, my only care was for my wife; I dreaded leſt by her attendance ſhe might catch the contagious diſtemper; but all reflection was loſt in the frightful delirium that ſucceeded. I remained for ſeveral days in this ſtate of inſenſibility; but a favourable criſis at laſt took place, and refreſhed by the bleſſing of ſleep, I awoke reſtored to reaſon. Inſtantly and with eagerneſs I ſought my Matilda; ſhe was abſent; and in anſwer to my enquiries was informed that ſhe had retired to reſt; this for a time deceived me; but growing impatient at ſo unuſual an abſence, and ſuſpicious from the looks and whiſpers of my attendants, I waited for a favourable moment, reſolved to diſcover the cauſe. With difficulty I quitted my bed, and ſlowly crept to the adjoining apartment. There

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an awful ſtillneſs reigned, and ſoon I perceived that I had entered the chamber of death; with trembling, feeble ſteps I approached the coffin, and with thoſe agonizing ſenſations too, too prophetic of my misfortunes, removed the lid, when—gracious Heaven!—I diſcovered thoſe dear features which were indelibly engraven on my memory. It was the corpſe of my adored Matilda.—At this confirmation of my fears, this certainty of my wretchedneſs, I ſunk ſenſeleſs on the ground. A dangerous relapſe was the conſequence, in which having languiſhed for ſeveral weeks, a ſettled melancholy ſucceeded, and I appeared the mere ſtatue of deſpair. I even heard unmoved that my ſon had fallen a victim to the diſorder which had deprived me of my beloved wife.

I was now neglected by my former gay aſſociates, and but for the grateful attentions of my ſervant, a Negro, it is but too probable, deſpair might have armed my hand againſt

againſt a wretched life ; he firſt taught my tears to flow, for ſo pathetically he lamented the loſs of his dear miſtreſs, that inſenſibly he ſoothed my ſorrows by his artleſs participation.

Scarcely was I reſtored to recollection, than a letter from my ſiſter informed me of the death of the daughter whom I had left in England. Thus deprived of every tye of all which could render life deſirable, I reſolved to paſs the reſidue of my days in ſolitude and retirement. Privately therefore with my ſervant, I quitted my habitation, and under his guidence, commenced my pilgrimage. I have wandered with him through ſcorching deſerts and on the ſummit of the glacier mountains, nor has the foaming cataract impeded my courſe ; for as my mind was only ſoothed by change and variety, my choice has been the wildeſt, moſt romantic ſcens of nature.

A few years ſince, an accident diſcovered me

me to a gentleman who had ſerved in the ſame regiment with me, from him I learnt that my brother was dead, and that attentive ſearch had been made for me, as the heir to his title and fortune. This bait was inſufficient to draw me from my retirement, but as it unavoidably led to ſome communication with the world, a letter was conveyed to me which effected an immediate change in my feelings, for it informed me that my daughter was alive. This letter had been written by my ſiſter at the moment when the ſharp arrow of affliction had awakened all her ſenſibility, for ſhe had known the bitter anguiſh of conſigning to the grave the object of all her hopes and cares, her beloved, her only child. At that diſtreſſing period when her mind was ſuſceptible of every parental feeling, a review of her conduct added freſh poignancy to her ſorrows; ſtruck, therefore with remorſe and contrition, ſhe confeſſed how ill ſhe had diſcharged the ſacred truſt which I repoſed in her.

"The report of my child's death, which ſhe had circulated, originated from her apprehenſions, that from my unfortunate ſituation, and hazardous mode of life, my daughter might be an encumbrance on her; and, as on her marriage with the Earl of Caſtlenarvon, ſhe had for ſeveral years reſided in Italy, it was not ſurpriſing (ſhe unfeelingly remarked) if in a continual ſucceſſion of pleaſure and amuſements, every idea of her niece had been effaced from her recollection. When ſhe became a parent, ſhe reſolved to make ſome inquiry after her; and, by beſtowing on her an education, qualify her for a companion to the young heireſs, while the motive would be attributed to charity and humanity. She, therefore, rem[illegible]d my daughter from her humble, though generous protectors, and placed her in a ſituation, which ſhe rendered far more humiliating than the moſt menial ſervant. She mentioned her marriage with Mr. Stanley as the ſource of her diſpleaſure, declaring, that it was in conſequence

ſequence of her forming this connection, ſo incompatible with her rank, that ſhe had wholly renounced her. Unfeeling woman! how could ſhe aggravate her guilt by this confeſſion; or for an inſtant forget, that what ſhe termed an imprudent act, originated from her arrogant and unfeeling conduct?

"This letter awakened every fond emotion, and I ſeized the firſt opportunity to return to my native country. I inſtantly repaired to my ſiſter, indulging the flattering hope of being reſtored to my long-loſt child—but in anſwer to my eager inquiries for Mr. Stanley, it was with concern I found, that his name and profeſſion were all ſhe knew. I therefore commenced the difficult ſearch, and a tedious interval elapſed in fruitleſs inquiry; but, on my arrival at this village, I eaſily gained the information---for to mention his name, excited every grateful ſenſation in the hearts of thoſe honeſt people; and

from every human being that I met, the praiſes of their much-loved, lamented paſtor, were eloquently reſounded.

"They conducted me to the cottage, and from the preſent poſſeſſor, I learnt with the utmoſt concern, that my daughter and her deſerving huſband had paid the debt of nature. He likewiſe informed me of your marriage with Mr. Hamilton, though he deplored your ſubſequent diſtreſſes, which had compelled you to ſeek an aſylum in a diſtant part of the world.

"Some important concerns called me to Ireland; but even there I commenced my inquiry, reſolving that neither difficulty nor danger ſhould impede my ſearch. It was with pleaſure I reflected, that I was enabled to remove from you all pecuniary diſtreſs, and by placing you in affluence contribute to your comforts; but highly am I gratified to find that by your merit alone you have attained ſo diſtinguiſhed

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an alliance—a circumſtance which reflects on you more honour, than even the elevated rank in which you are placed."

Lord Melſom here cloſed his narrative, and the length of this letter reminds me, that it is time to conclude.

I am with ardent prayers for my Louiſa's ſafety, her ever affectionate friend,

CAROLINE NARSBY.

In CONTINUATION.

London, Feb. 27.

AFTER having paſſed ſeveral weeks in all the delightful intercourſe of friendſhip, we yeſterday returned to this place. With regret I quitted my native village; but I have with pleaſure heard the Earl's determination, that early in the ſpring, he will return to that delightful ſpot, aſſuring me, that Howard Park will henceforth be his favourite reſidence; and it is a circumſtance peculiarly gratifying that I find he is as much beloved and reſpected, as hitherto he has been feared and diſliked.

Lord

Lord Melſom, at the Earl's requeſt, has conſented to reſide with us, and I am happy in knowing that he is pleaſed with our ſociety; gratified by my attentions, and delighted with my Harriet, he declares, that he feels a renovation of health and ſpirits, and that comfort has ſucceeded to the taſteleſs apathy, which has marked many years of his life.

I am now in expectation of my dear Agatha, who will oblige me with her company during my confinement. The Earl contemplates the event with anxious impatience, declaring, that his every chance for happineſs,—his future comforts, depend on my recovery.

You, my Louiſa, will rejoice at this proof of tenderneſs; and to you with grateful pleaſure I acknowledge, that I wholly poſſeſs the affections of the kindeſt,

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moſt deſerving, and attentive huſband, and that even your friendſhip cannot form a wiſh beyond the happineſs that is enjoyed by

Your friend,

CAROLINE NARSBY.

To Miſs WARBURTON.

London, April 25.

THE regard we mutually feel for our dear Caroline, renders a ſtudied introduction from Agatha to Louiſa unneceſſary—it is ſufficient that I communicate an event, which contributes to her happineſs, to ſecure a welcome reception for this letter. She is the joyful mother of a ſon, an event which ſtill more endears her to her delighted huſband.

Her conduct through great and ſevere trials has been exemplary, and her reſignation and patient endurance are now amply rewarded; for ſhe poſſeſſes the affections

tions of her deſerving huſband, and for her numerous virtues and amiable qualities, is beloved and revered.

Thy ſafe arrival has relieved her mind from anxious cares for thy ſafety, and contributes to her felicity. The ſervant, who will deliver this epiſtle, has orders to conduct thee to the friends, to whom thou art dear, though perſonally ſtrangers—admit in that number thy affectionate

AGATHA.

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THE END.